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MEAN MACHINES SEGA

E3: THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
HOT PICS FROM L.A!
WORLD EXCLUSIVE SATURN NEWS!

THE BIG 3

MORTAL KOMBAT 3
FIRST MEGADRIVE SHOTS!

PRIMAL RAGE
16 AND 32BIT MAYHEM!

Virtua Fighter 2
UNVEILED ON SATURN!

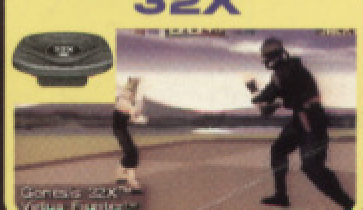


MEGADRIVE

JUDGE DREDD

SATURN

SHINOBI X

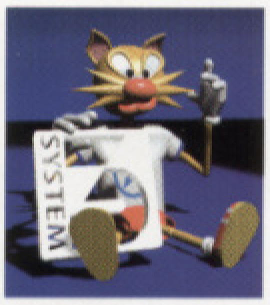
32X

VIRTUA FIGHTER

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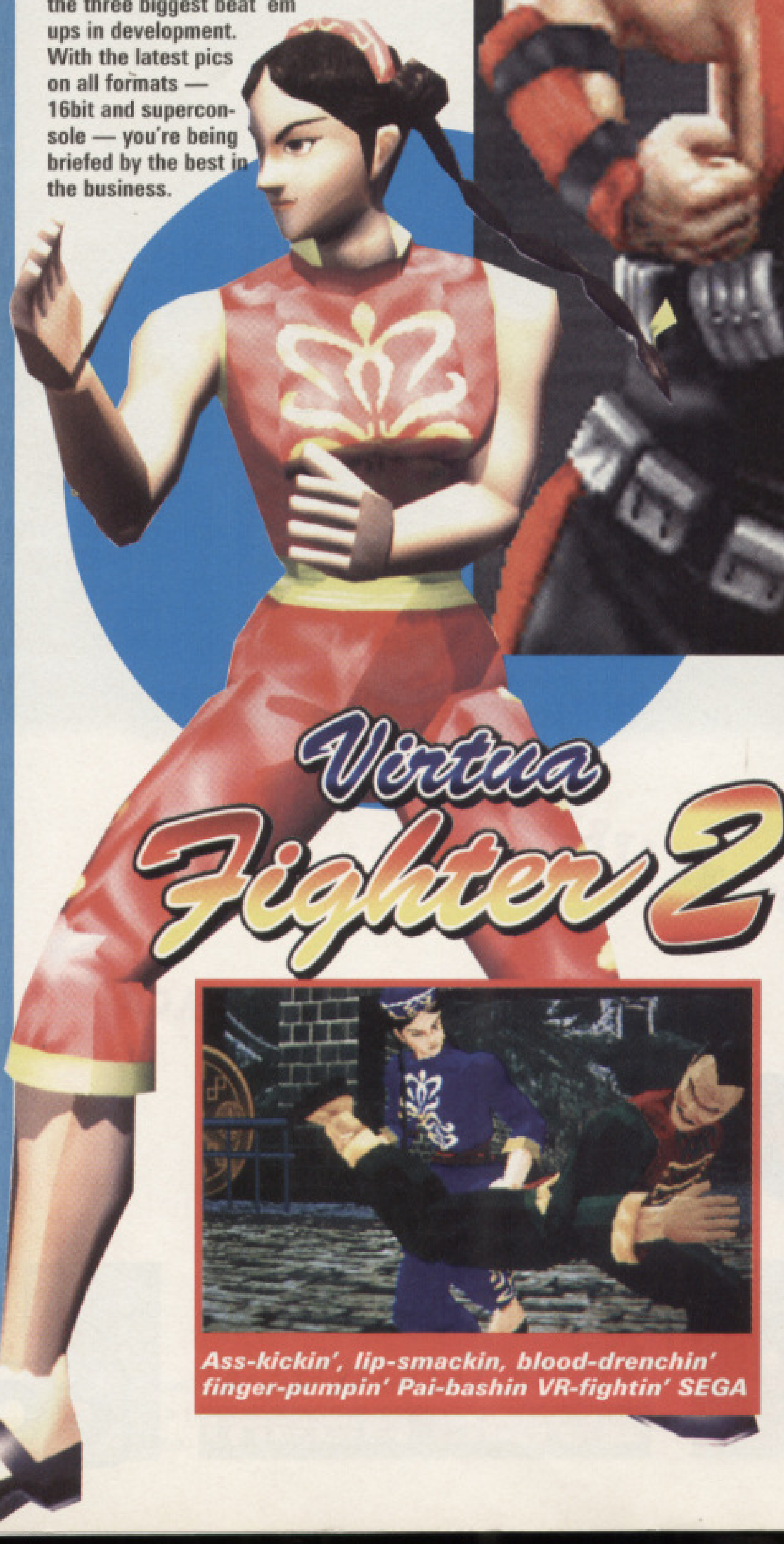
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CONTENTS

COVER STORY

MEAN MACHINES EXCLUSIVE





Ass-kickin', lip-smackin, blood-drenchin' finger-pumpin' Pai-bashin VR-fightin' SEGA

REGULARS

CONTENTS

FEATURES

PREVIEWS







Gimme Five, bro!



"Are you sure it won't leave a mark?"

REVIEWS

MEGADRIVE

32X

SATURN

GAME GEAR

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the all-new MEAN MACHINES! As you can see, we've undergone a complete redesign, with Oz going through the mag section by section and pulling everything to bits. The new changes have been made to ensure that MEAN MACHINES can keep up with the exciting changes afoot with the imminent release of the Saturn, and as such not only have we given the mag a new look, but we've somehow managed to make our scoring system even more comprehensive. I mean, we were good before, but we're bloody great now. MEAN MACHINES has always been copied in the past, so we eagerly await our rivals adding animation and separate music and effects boxes to their score systems as they too realise the Saturn's music and capabilities are too good to limit to one box. But don't think we've neglected the good old Megadrive in our redesign. Nope, we're got more Megadrive exclusives than ever — including the first MKIII pics for the system — and the spangly new panels and pics just make the hoary old console look even better. For a full inventory of the new panels, they are outlined elsewhere here, but E3 beckons and I'm off to look at all the new Saturn stuff. Still, enjoy the new-look mag, and stay with us as we lead the rest into the newly-invigorated world of the Sega machines. Oh yeah, and goodbye to the Master System. We would say it's been fun, but it's about bloody time you died. You've been on the brink of death longer than the Queen Mum...
Steve

RING THE CHANGES!

The more perceptive of you will doubtless appreciate that we've mucked about with the review info panels. All in the name of progress, natch. On the first panel, we've changed our game profile scores from five to ten, breaking the game down for levels of Challenge, Strategy, Reflexes, Originality and action. You'll noticed the Saturn panel does not have a memory panel, as all games come on 650MB CD ROMs.



ALLOW US TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES

The MEAN MACHINES' TEAM has changed a lot since the days of Jaz and Matt Regan, so we thought we'd take the chance to reintroduce ourselves. Er, here we are then...



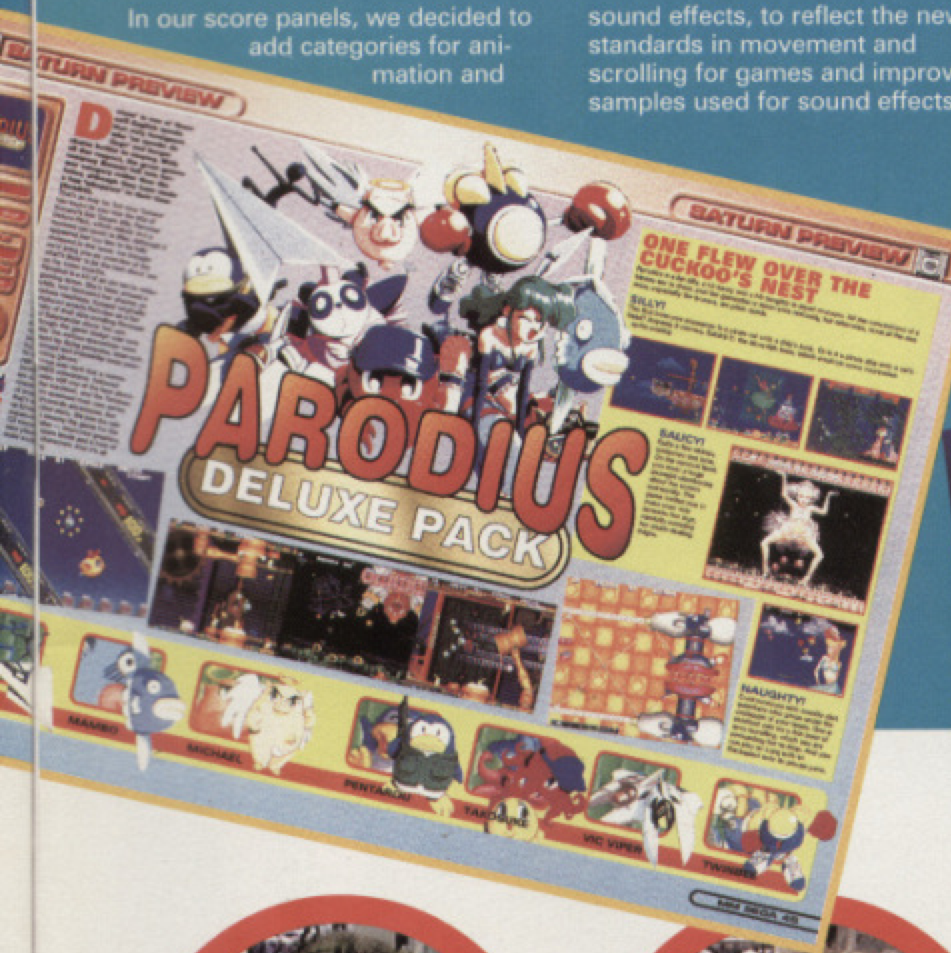
NAME: Steve Merrett
JOB: Editor
DATE OF BIRTH: 19/9/68
STAR SIGN: Spandex
HEIGHT: 5' 10"
WEIGHT: Getting more
INTERESTING FEATURES: Crap hair
FIRST MACHINE OWNED: C64. Torch.
FAVOURITE GAMES: International Superstar Soccer, any Bomberman, MKII
FAVOURITE TELLY PROGS: Doctor Who, The Day Today, Corrie, Euro Trash
FAVOURITE FILMS: Aliens, Day/Dawn of The Dead, T2, Pulp Fiction
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Any Paul Weller, Terry Hall, Let Loose
LIKES: Chips, Coke, slobbing on a Sunday, farting, West Ham
DISLIKES: British Rail, teeny pop idols, bueracracy
MOUSTACHE PREFERENCES: Thin. Like Midge Ure's
EMBARRASSING SCARS?: Yes, only an arse one every bugger knows about, though...
EVER LIT A FART?: Yep. But only through jeans
HAPPINESS TO ME IS: a weekend not spent organising a wedding



NAME: Osmond Kevin Browne
JOB: Put-Upon
DATE OF BIRTH: 12/10/67
STAR SIGN: Libra
HEIGHT: 5' 11"
WEIGHT: 11 stone
INTERESTING FEATURES: Gladiators T-Shirt
FIRST MACHINE OWNED: C64
FAVOURITE GAMES: Thunderforce III, Daytona, Street Fighter
FAVOURITE TELLY PROGS: Quantum Leap, Film '95, Little House On The Prairie
FAVOURITE FILMS: Star Wars, Grease, Terminator, Alien
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Janet 'flickin' Jackson,
LIKES: Hot chocolate (the drink, not the group), his Quantum Leap T-Shirt, Halle Berry
DISLIKES: Football on the telly, strawberry jam, Marmite
MOUSTACHE PREFERENCES: Short and tidy
EMBARRASSING SCARS?: Only mentally
EVER LIT A FART?: No, but is working on it
HAPPINESS TO ME IS: World peace (groan)



NAME: (John) Angus Davidson Swan
JOB: Deputy Dawg
DATE OF BIRTH: 12/9/70
STAR SIGN: Virgin Megastore
HEIGHT: Of good taste
WEIGHT: 10.5 st
INTERESTING FEATURES: Heads zips up the back.
FIRST MACHINE OWNED: pedal police car
FAVOURITE GAMES: Virtua Cop, Daytona USA
FAVOURITE TELLY PROGS: Have I Got News For You, Roseanne
FAVOURITE FILMS: Alien, Interview with the Vampire, Annie Hall
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Erasure, Sheryl Crow, New Order
LIKES: Lie-ins, money, flattery,good red wine
DISLIKES: getting up when it's dark, stupidity
MOUSTACHE PREFERENCES: Mad walrus whisker ones
EMBARRASSING SCARS?: I can afford good plastic surgery
EVER LIT A FART?: No, too scared I'd burn my butt.
HAPPINESS TO ME IS: The christmas hols.



In our score panels, we decided to add categories for animation and sound effects, to reflect the new standards in movement and scrolling for games and improved samples used for sound effects.



NAME: Claire Louise Coulthard
JOB: Deputy Art Ed
DATE OF BIRTH: 13/9/68
STAR SIGN: Virgo
HEIGHT: 5' 9"
WEIGHT: A national secret (ie. gert heavy!)
INTERESTING FEATURES: Centre parting
FIRST MACHINE OWNED: Spectrum 48K
FAVOURITE GAMES: Puyo Puyo, Atic Atac, Daytona, Mario World
FAVOURITE TELLY PROGS: Barrymore, Surprise Surprise, Hearts Of Gold
FAVOURITE FILMS: Digby: The Biggest Dog In The World
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Tricky, Portishead, Mo Wax, Beastie Boys
LIKES: Chocolate, ponies, Montague The Chimp
DISLIKES: The toys you get in Kinder Eggs these days
MOUSTACHE PREFERENCES: Curly villain ones
EMBARRASSING SCARS?: No thanks, not today
EVER LIT A FART?: Excuse me?
HAPPINESS TO ME IS: A world made of chocolate



NAME: Paul Robert Bufton
JOB: Staff Writer
DATE OF BIRTH: 9/7/71
STAR SIGN: Cancer
HEIGHT: 6' 0"
WEIGHT: 10 stone
INTERESTING FEATURES: Big hair, big jumpers, neat sneakers
FIRST MACHINE OWNED: Acorn Electron
FAVOURITE GAMES: Elite, Super Mario World, Daytona USA, Chrono Trigger
FAVOURITE TELLY PROGS: Northern Exposure, Noel's House Party, Star Trek
FAVOURITE FILMS: Star Wars Trilogy, 2001 – A Space Odyssey, Pulp Fiction
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Stones, Dead, Floyd... Rock!
LIKES: Cartoons, Sunday lunch, puppies
DISLIKES: Tidying, getting up, tubes
MOUSTACHE PREFERENCES: More of a beard man myself
EMBARRASSING SCARS?: None
EVER LIT A FART?: Class Champion of 1989, if you please
HAPPINESS TO ME IS: A summer's eve accompanied by a flagon of ale

THE SECRETS OF STEVE

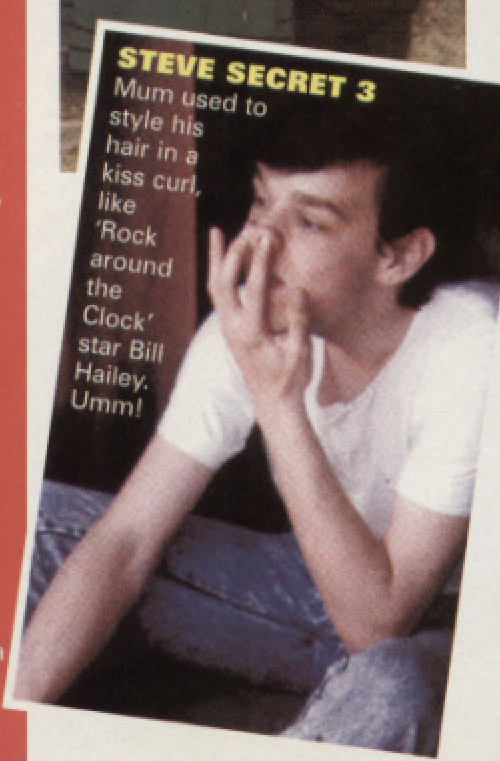
Not long after Steve left the country, a curious brown-paper package arrived at the office. When opened, the crew were astonished to find the most incriminating pictures of young Steven Merrett imaginable. Spare a thought of our proud editor, returning from LA, picking up the magazine to find....



STEVE SECRET 1
He supposedly wore bike stabilisers until he was twelve. Ouch!



STEVE SECRET 2
His mother allegedly still cuts his toenails. Yuck!



STEVE SECRET 3
Mum used to style his hair in a kiss curl, like 'Rock around the Clock' star Bill Hailey. Umm!

LOOKIN' GOOD

EDITOR
STEVE 'stateside' MERRETT
ART EDITOR
OSMOND 'pressured' BROWNE
DEPUTY EDITOR
GUS 'dour' SWAN
DEPUTY ART EDITOR
CLAIRE 'stripper' COULTHARD
STAFF WRITER
PAUL 'staying' BUFTON
STRANGELY BROWN
RAD 'bolton' AUTOMATIC
CONTRIBUTING WORDSMITHS
RICHARD 'steering wheel' LEADBETTER
AD MANAGER
LIZA 'lonesome' HAWKES
LAUGHING GNOME
IAN 'david rappaport' THOMPSON
PRODUCT MANAGER
NICHOLA 'phucket' BENTLEY
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
GRAHAM 'surprised' TAYLOR
SPECIAL THANKS TO: Tracy M. Cheers!
SPECIAL NO THANKS: Those blameless people put there to p*** Steve off.
COVER BY
Steve Kyte.

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COMPETITION RULES
Employees and suppliers of EMAP IMAGES and their relatives are not eligible for competitions. There is no cash alternative for any of the prizes on offer. Mind you, judging by some of the bloody awful snowboard pics we got, some of you should be sending us cash...

PEOPLE WE HATE
Listed here are people we unreasonably hate. In fact, we hate them more than anything. Even Swedes. Send us your nominations, and the best list and reasons will get a pristine copy of Fever Pitch. And a cake.
1. MR MOTIVATOR: Arch criminal turd. Tosspot, in fact.
2. DANI BEHR: About as interesting as old people's war stories.
3. LET LOOSE: Too old for teenies. Crap as well.
4. THAT GORDON BLOKE OFF THE LOTTERY: Winner of 'Squarest Head' award four years running. Unfunny sod.
5. BRUNO BROOKES: 'Rent-A-Celeb.' Pillock.

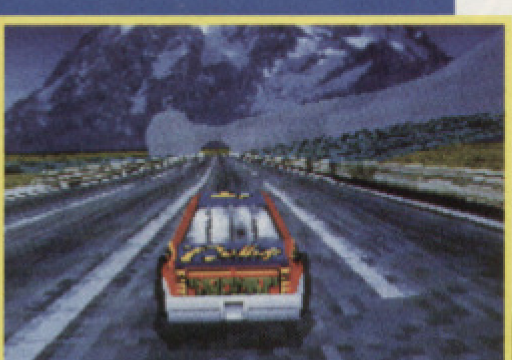

Wanna come for a ride in the park?
Go on, it'll be lots of fun. Theme Park, last year's smash hit, is now available for your Mega Drive, and it's as good as ever. Compete with 19 other power freaks to build the world's best theme park, and make a packet of cash on the side.
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Yep, it's japes aplenty in the world of the funfair, so why not come along for the ride?
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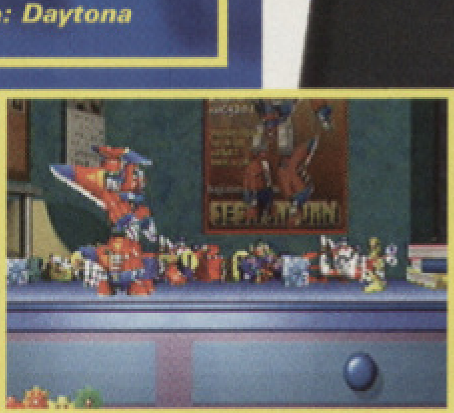
SEGA SATU

Sega stunned the massive E3 games show in Los Angeles this month by announcing the immediate launch of the Sega Saturn in the States. The appearance of the Saturn on May 10th took everyone by surprise, Sega had managed to keep the secret launch from the press and its rivals. US retail chains are now stocking the machine at $399, (about £250).

The move must count as a complete reversal in Sega's plans, as they had already publicised a launch for 'Saturn's Day', Saturday the 2nd of September.
Instead, Tom Kalinske, Sega of America's supremo, delivered a seminar on Saturn at E3, ringing its praises, then reportedly rounding it off with "'and it's in your stores now". At the same time, reports from excited Sega fans were flooding Sega's Internet site.
In the aftermath of the news, eyes turned to Sega's rivals Sony and Nintendo for a reaction. Sony's immediate response was that their Playstation machine would be $100 cheaper when released on September 9th, but there was no reflex reaction to rush-release the machine to prevent Sega getting an advantage. For Nintendo, the news coincided with their own announcement that their Ultra 64 machine will not now appear in Japan until April 1996 at the earliest.
The response from Sega in London was muted, but there is growing speculation that the projected early



launch game: Daytona



launch game: Clockwork Knight.



UT!

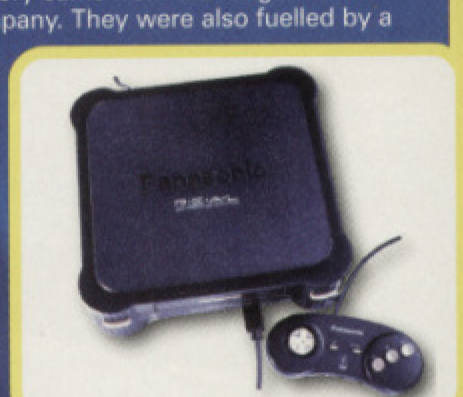
RN STRIKES U.S

September release date here may be brought forward by some weeks in a move to mirror America.
Sega pointedly reminded us that they have never set an 'official date' for the Saturn in the UK, which may support that speculation. But they also state that Saturn will not be released until it has the right software to support it, running in an optimised form for the PAL TV format used in the UK. This means that games need some significant changes if they are too run across the full-screen format, and not with screen borders.
One benefit is the early release of Saturn titles developed in America, including Bug!, which should be out within the next few weeks. The price-point, which turns out to be about the lowest anyone expected, bodes well for the UK, which should hope to get the Saturn for about £350. It also shows that Sega are finally biting the Saturn bullet outside Japan. MEAN MACHINES has lobbied for an official release, so that those who want to join the next generation now, can.



'GANG OF THREE' RUMOUR HITS SHOW

A second major story of the E3 show, was an unconfirmed rumour that Sega has been exploring the potential for compatibility between the Saturn and the rival 3DO machine. At the time of MEAN MACHINES going to press, the exact nature of this unlikely alliance, if true at all, was unconfirmed, as the top people from each company are in L.A. However, sources for the story came from the magazine world in Tokyo, and developers at a large and highly-respected software company. They were also fuelled by a report in the Wall Street Journal, which suggested Sega might take a stake in 3DO. The heads of Sega and 3DO would not comment on that speculative story. Philips enters the picture as another possible investor in 3DO, which has had money troubles, with the possible view to producing a compatible CD machine. Therefore the prospect of three-way cooperation arises.
All three companies are thinking about the next step in technology. 3DO is already making a big fuss over it's planned upgrade, the M2 Accelerator, which slots into the machine. It's possible that, with agreement, a modified version of the M2 could fit all three machines. This means that future CDs would work with all three, but that present titles and non-upgraded machines would not.





launch game: Virtua Fighter. A fully textured version was a show speciality.

FIGHTER REMIXED

- SHOW REPORT
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

One nice feature of the show was a special 'remix' version of Virtua Fighter. It's essentially the same game as the Saturn disc on sale, but with texturing added to the backgrounds and players and some other tweaks. It demonstrates the advances made since the original game's development, only a year ago. There are no plans for general release.

COPPIN'

● NEW GAME
● BY SEGA
● SATURN

Sega's Virtua Cop Saturn conversion blew everything else away at the show, with AM2's arcade hit locked on target for a pre-Christmas release.

Sega's AM2 development team have overseen the conversion of the Model 2 coin-op, and are confident that it will be arcade perfect. With screenshots like these, who are we to argue?

The polygon cop game will run at an incredibly smooth 60 frames a second (PAL TVs are only updated 50 times a second), while losing none of the textures and details of the original. The two-player option was also be included. Sega are planning a simultaneous release of a laser-aimed side-arm for the authentic experience. Light gun suckers — fingers on wallets!



HUM DINGER

● NEW GAME
● BY SEGA
●32X

A strange game going by the equally strange name of Kolibri, was one of the 32X highlights of E3. Ecological shoot 'em up best describes the action that has you in control of a hummingbird, in what could also be billed as a battle of the tongues. The action is very much like the Fantasy Zone games, blasting everything on each scrolling environment, but the graphics are sumptuous: hundreds of colours and loads of layered parallax. Very much one to watch out for in a future preview.


Genesis 32X™ Kolibri™




Genesis 32X™ Kolibri™

32X FLAUNTS FIGHTER!

● SHOW REPORT
● BY SEGA
● SATURN

The 32X began to hit back at E3, in no small way due to Virtua Fighter, which was running as an impressive demo. The conversion, by AM2 and due in time for Christmas is basically the one game capable of selling a machine that most Megadrive owners have treated with caution.

Sega may well have a killer game on their hands. The backgrounds and polygon-constructed fighters are recognisably simpler than their arcade or Saturn counterparts, but the speed and smoothness of the animation is pretty incredible, considering the 'standard' set by titles like Motherbase. Truly a show-stopper.





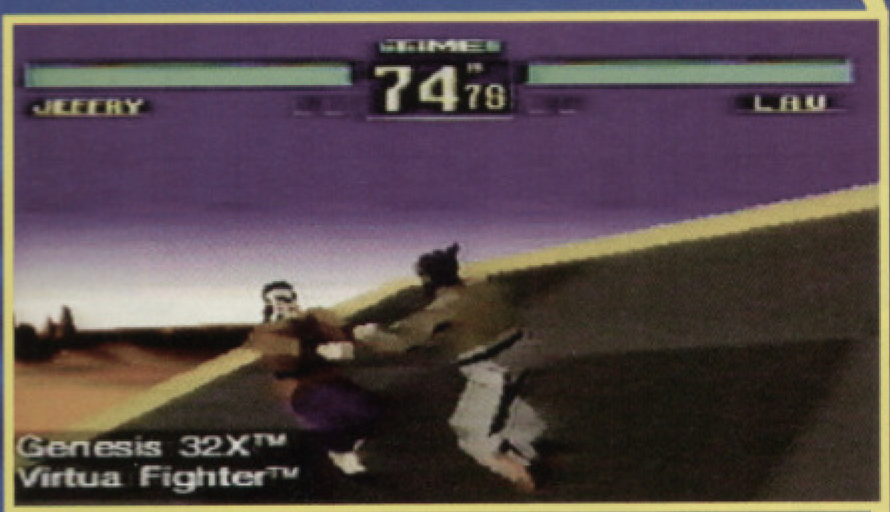
Genesis 32X™ Virtua Fighter™


Genesis 32X™ Virtua Fighter™

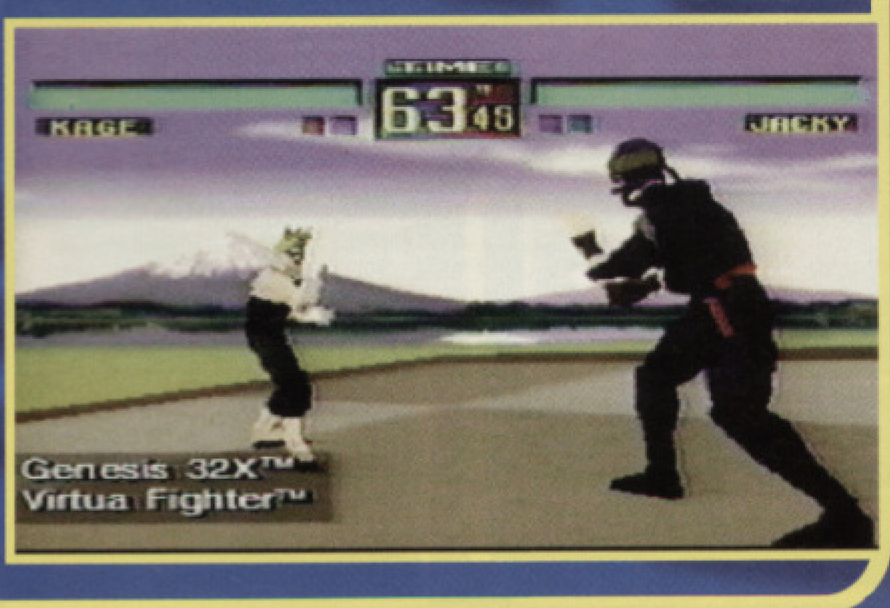
OFF!







Genesis 32X™
Virtua Fighter™



Genesis 32X™
Virtua Fighter™

BAT A BOY

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- MEGA CD


Sega CD™
The Adventures of Batman™ & Robin™

Sega are developing a Mega CD version of Batman, based on the animated series license. There is indeed, a cartoon bit on the CD, fitting in with the real game action. In a move reminiscent of Batman Returns, the CD has custom 3D car driving sections, where the batjet, batmobile and whatever dash through some scaling highways. But with all these Batman games due this summer, we could see some unruly squabbles between men in rubber capes.


Sega CD™
The Adventures of Batman™ & Robin™


Sega CD™
The Adventures of Batman™ & Robin™

FAT CATS BACKLASH

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- MEGADRIVE

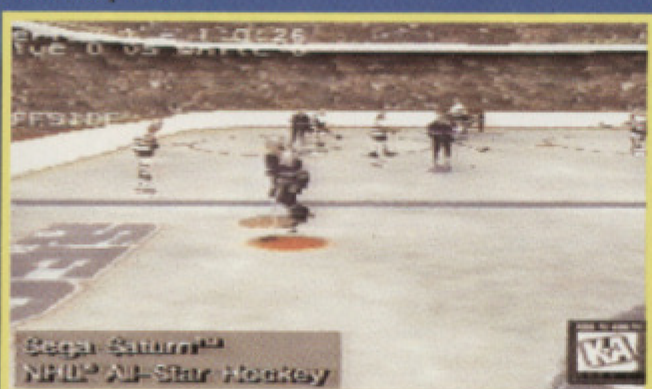
We are not so cynical to believe in a department at Sega called The Crap Platform Games Room. But if it did exist, they would have started work on the new Garfield game (probably after finishing Wild Woody). To be honest, we haven't seen a great deal on the game, but it seems to add nothing to a pile of others like Daffy Duck, Speedy Gonzales, Road Runner...Sentence deferred until a later review.

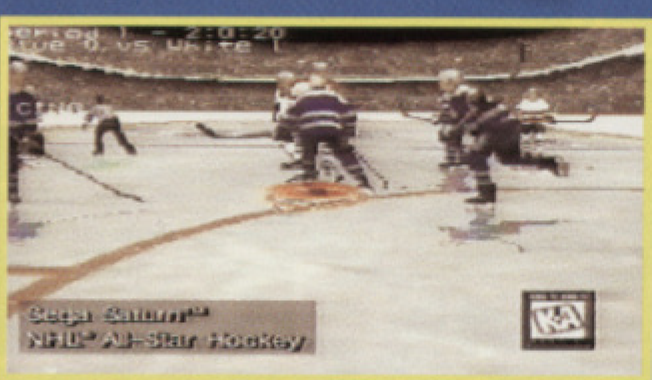


SIN BIN

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

The Sega sports label looks destined to be swelled with amazing virtual renditions of all kinds of sports. One of the first is Ice Hockey, here shown in its amazing behind-the-player perspective. Although looking a bit blocky close-up, there's remarkable freedom over the viewpoint, and the action is incredibly fast.



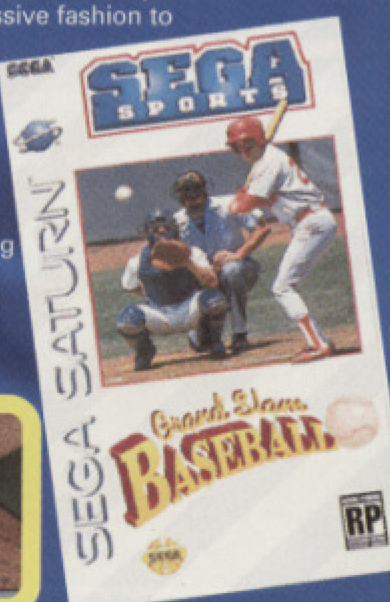


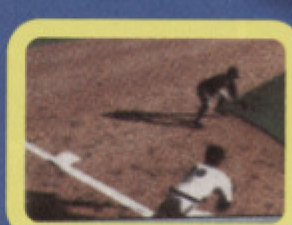
HOME RUN

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

Baseball is a sport rarely away from the top of release schedules, and Sega have a sim planned for the new American market. Details of the format are limited, but as would be expected, it uses a 3D polygon depiction of the diamond, and goes overboard on the effects. One sequence zooms around the stadium in impressive fashion to celebrate hitting a home run.

Sega's game has confirmed competition in the form of Super Pro Baseball, a cutified interpretation of the sport originating from Japan and converted from the Sony Playstation.







SUPER BOWL

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

First pics of one of the first Saturn sports games (Victory Goal being a distant memory), Sega's as yet untitled American Football game. No messing, Sega have gone for the kind of pitch-level 3D perspective denied to all previous gridiron games. After years of moaning about the glut of Megadrive American Football games, we actually have some sense of anticipation about this one!

THE CYBERMEN COMETH

- NEW GAME
- BY NAMCO
- SATURN

Namco have confirmed Cybersled for the Saturn, to appear before the end of the year. Originally an arcade game, it was a polygon-frilled update of Battlezone, the classic 3D tank-battle game. Players seek out enemies through a series of simple mazes, armed with various futuristic weapons. The two-player option formed a major part of the game's (limited) appeal. Although not massively exciting in itself, the news signals the first foray into Saturn territory for a company who have been converting all their coin-ops for the Playstation. Hopefully, news of Ridge Racer, Tekken and Cyber Commando (CyberSled's sequel) will follow.



WORD OF THE LORD

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

RPG fans with Saturns should anticipate the arrival of Sega's Riglord Saga. The game is an adventure with elements of Shining Force, Phantasy Star and many of the adventure series that are hugely popular in Japan. The innovation, possible with the Saturn's power, is a changing isometric perspective and some wonderful battle and magic animation. Players manipulate their party on a 3D grid, then sit and watch their confrontations be animated. Riglord is half-finished, is creating quite a stir in Japan, but translational problems may delay its release here after the official Saturn launch.



OUT!



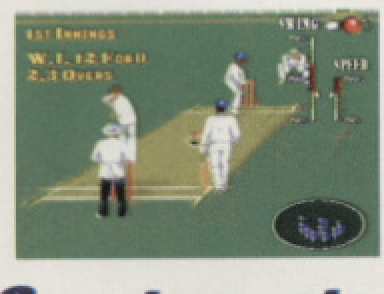
(NOW)

"Very playable and addictive - an ace conversion of a classic sport to the Megadrive." **Mean Machines**

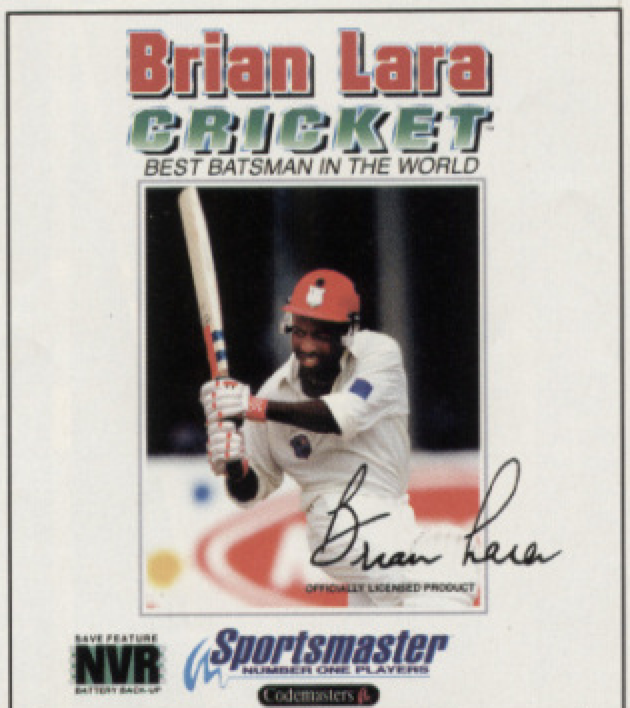
Brian Lara, the highest scoring batsman in Test history has joined the Sportsmaster team for this superb box-busting cricket simulation.

For the first time, square drives, on drives and cover drives are all on the Megadrive.

Up to 4 of you can play, selecting the team and adopting different tactics as well as having complete control of all your players



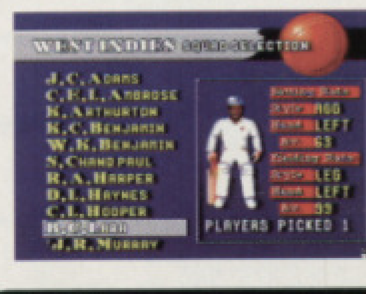
Sportsmaster
NUMBER ONE PLAYERS



on the field. You can even save the game using the battery back-up.

Bouncers, yorkers, googlies - everything except ball-tampering is right here, accurately reproduced in real-time 3D panoramic perspective!

You'll need judgement, cunning and fingers like lightning - are you up to the ultimate test?



Codemasters

Lower Farm House, Stoneythorpe, Southam, Warwickshire CV33 ODL. U.K. Tel: 01926 814 132 Fax: 01926 817 595

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

Another of the American Saturn projects underway is Black Fire, a helicopter combat game in the classic mode. Black Fire uses the now ubiquitous virtual perspective and polygon-generated landscapes. We've seen effects like gouraud shading used to create believable terrains. Despite the pretty graphics, Black Fire promises to be a non-holds barred blaster.





ZERO OPTIO

- NEW GAME
- BY CAPCOM
- ARCADE

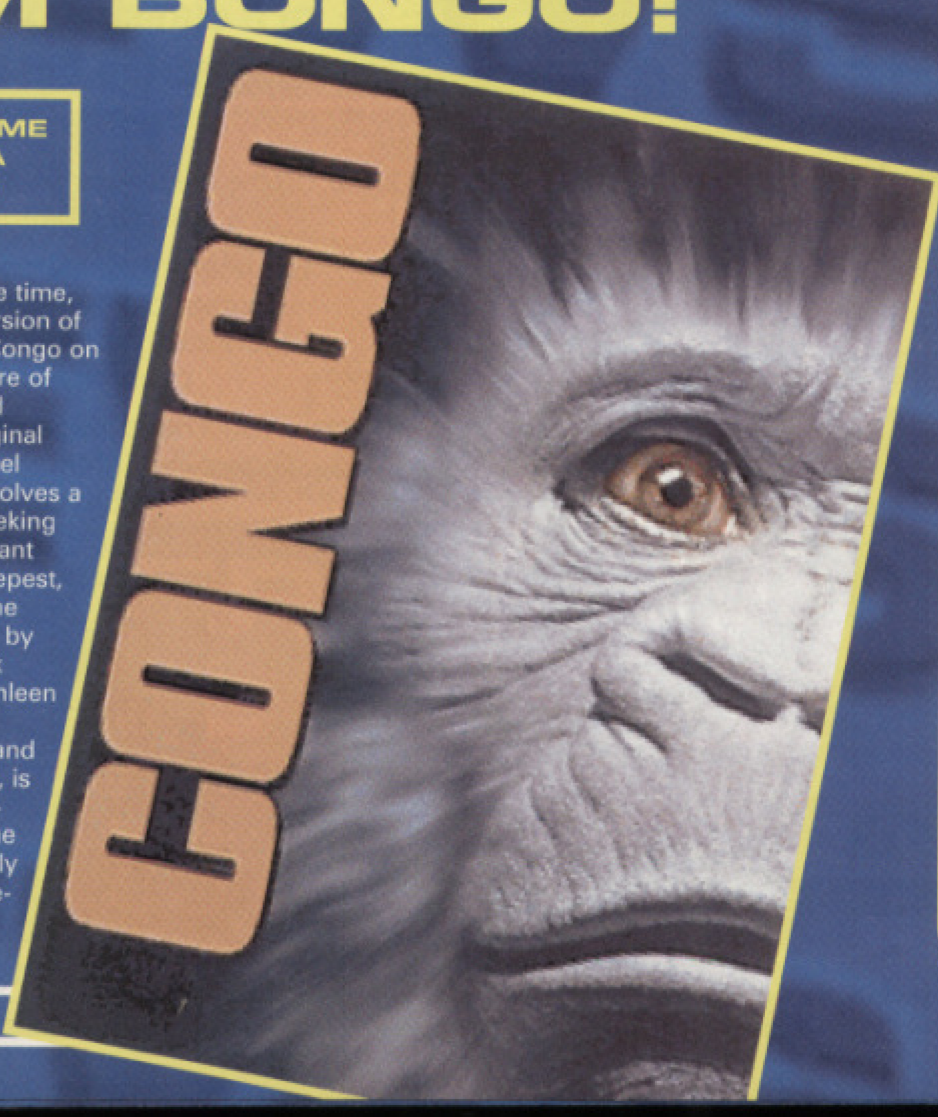
To tie-in with the release of the Streetfighter movie, Capcom, who financed the film to a cool $25m, have released Streetfighter II Movie Edition arcade game. Featuring the same characters and moves as the standard SF II cabinet, the game has undergone a complete graphic transformation, with all the sprites turned to digitised versions of their screen counterparts. The backgrounds have also changed to reflect the sets of the movie.

Capcom are also producing a further Streetfighter game. Not the long-awaited Streetfighter 3, but Streetfighter Zero. A novel approach has been taken by setting the game in pre-Streetfighter 2 times. The characters you control are those of the first Streetfighter game that Capcom released to minor acclaim back in 1987. The graphics are well up to today's standards, thankfully, but the whole experience is billed as an 80's nostalgia trip.



UM BONGO! UM BONGO!

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN



Big movie license time, with a Saturn version of the new thriller Congo on the way. A mixture of Jurassic Park and Predator, the original story is by Michael Crichton, and involves a girlie scientist seeking out a deadly mutant form of life in deepest, darkest Africa. The movie, produced by the team of Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy (Arachnophobia and countless others), is due out this summer, and the game will borrow heavily from its suspenseful jungle atmosphere.

KANGAROO COURT

- NEW GAME
- BY OCEAN
- MEGADRIVE

Ocean, license-snappers par excellence, have snapped rights for console versions of Tank Girl, the movie. The movie is based on the artwork of Jamie Hewlett and the scripts of Alan Martin, who created the ultimate female for Deadline comic back in the late 80s. From her humble docmartened beginnings, Tank Girl's brand of post-apocalyptic ass-kicking has gone from strength to strength, being licensed to cult comic firm Dark Horse and from thence to a big budget movie starring Lori Petty. Ocean's game plan is to maintain all the unnecessary violence and Tank Girl's distinctive image (sort of Mad Max meets Carnaby St.) and of course her mate, a talking kangaroo. But they won't be 'doing it' in game or film, unlike the strips....



ON



DIGI-VID

- HARDWARE
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

Sega have launched a digital video plug-in for the Saturn in Japan. The adaptor allows you to view Video CDs, that can hold videos and film of up to 70 minutes lnegth per CD. The device is similar to those for the CD-i and 3DO. In fact, the Saturn unit is rumoured to be compatible with existing CD-Vs. Also on the cards is a viewer for Kodak CDs, allowing you to manipulate your family snaps with neat digital effects. Both units should be released here before Christmas.



E3 SHOW REPORT

For the first in-depth look at all the new games from the E3 show, including those shown here and many more not: Fifa Saturn, Zyrinx's X-men and Virtua Fighter Remix, look out for the July issue of Sega Magazine, which has an exclusive Show Report. On sale from July 13th.

Many Thanks to Sega Magazine and Richard Leadbetter for pictures of Virtua Fighter 32X, Kolibri, Batman CD, and Garfield.

DOOM BUGGIES

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

One of Sega America's Saturn games to come to light is Ghen War, an intriguing 3D blast set on alien worlds. With the player controlling a hi-tech buggy of destruction, the game features fast, detailed polygon action covering vast areas of planetary terrain. Billed as a 32bit Doom beater with some incredible sprite effects, we want to get our hands on this one.





Oh lordy, it's SFII Zero. The Dad's Army of video games: another chance to see...

METROPOLISE

- NEW GAME
- BY MAXIS
- SATURN

Maxis plan to convert some of their smash-hit 'Sim' games to the Saturn. First up is a version of Sim City 2000, the American coders' city-building simulation.

The game is an ongoing challenge to plan an infinite potential of different cityscapes, dealing with all the problems that arise from pollution, taxation and the drama of natural disasters.

Maxis plan to follow this with a version of Sim Tower, their very latest game. Here the principals of management and problem-solving are the same, but the environment in quite different — a skyscraper. Though not quite as well received as Sim City 2000, Sim Tower attracts many with its curious mix: from letting expensive apartments, to fixing lifts and coffee machines. Look out for both early next year.



WIZARD PRANG

● NEW GAME
● BY SEGA
● MEGA-CD

The Gauntlet is thrown to Mega-CD owners with a curious homage to the great Atari adventure coin-op of that name, from Sega. They have constructed Dark Wizard, a CD RPG that looks very much like the plan view arcade adventure. Spells, weapons and tons of ghosts is the order of the day, and it looks a tad more action packed than most recent CD only efforts.



FILE UNDER X

●COMPO
● X-FILES



The X-Files has to be the biggest cult TV show in years, and it's spawning all sorts of merchandise. Manga Publishing are launching an official monthly comic with X-Files stories, compos and exclusive information on the next series. They've offered us ten copies of the Collector's Edition first issue, which we know is a complete sell-out. To win one of these precious copies, answer this question and send to: DO YOU WANT PUBLICITY OR SHALL WE CALL YOU MR X? COMPO, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

And the question is:

What is the name of the X-Files resourceful female FBI agent?

A) Susan Tully
B) Dana Scully
C) Hugh Scully

Copies of the X-Files first edition to the first ten correct answers pulled from the time slip.

BIG ROBOT MAMAS

●COMPO
● FROM PIONEER
● VHSR

Get a load of this: "Aira is now in the holy shrine of Green 5. The five bishops from the Holy Greens assemble at Green 5 to torment and test whether Aira is a true selected clan of the Silver Maiden". If you want to get the answer to this nailbiter, you'll have to buy Green legend, one of a new manga range from Pioneer. They are also releasing Kishin Heiden vols 1 and 2 — hardcore manga with large robots with big shoulder pads. 'In', as they say, 'your video store now'.



YOU DON'T SAY...

Steve's away, but there's always someone left to dish the dirt...

Sega have been making encouraging noises about their Virtua Fighter conversion on 32X, of the "it'll blow you away" type. Not that the guys need to drum up a little enthusiasm for the upgrade which has provoked some strong reactions from buyers expecting 'arcade-perfect' experiences and not experiencing them. However, the conversion is meant to be stunningly good and holding its own against the Saturn.

Big brother hasn't got the beat 'em up field completely under control, as an apparent Van Battle debacle seems to be brewing. Looking pretty unpromising in development, this digitised Streetfighter clone seems likely for Jap release, but may be left for the third parties to scrap over here. It can hardly be called confidence for a Sega source to describe it as 'Kasumi Ninja on the Saturn'.

And another one bites...this time it's a game called Wild Woody that Sega had developed. Appearing on a few release schedules, the idea of a platform game featuring a pencil didn't sound too inspiring. It's sinking without trace at present. Brighter news from the States, where Vectorman is being described as the new Sonic. A much-needed adrenalin boost for the Megadrive, and on course for Christmas.

Rumours abound that Capcom's Darkstalkers coin-op — it's a beat 'em up, but then it's Capcom, so what do you expect — will indeed be Saturn bound. Originally it was one of those Playstation hostages to fortune. About the guys over at Sony. Well things seem amicable at the moment, but it appears an unofficial ban on cross-development exists (understand given the circumstances). So, some of those Psygnosis goodies for PS may never make it to Saturn, though Discworld had been promised. But situations change...

Some sad news about US Gold's Indy's Adventures, reviewed and respectfully rated this month. Seems a delay until September is inevitable, by which time Tom Guise should be able to make it off the burning house level. Oh, two new games we couldn't get off our tod to review — Speedy Gonzales, which is complete jobby; and Infogrames' Smurfs on CD, which is Megadrive Smurfs...but on CD, with a cartoon intro.

Til next month,
Pip Pip!

THE BIG 3

Mortal Kombat III, Virtua Fighter II and Primal Rage. The three biggest beat 'em ups of the year — with the home versions laid bare for you all to see...



If there's one game that is on arcade-goers' lips, it's Midway's Mortal Kombat III. So, because we're nice and all that, we proudly present everything you have ever wanted to know about MKIII — and reveal the first proper details regarding GT Interactive's imminent Saturn conversion and Sculptured's as-yet unsigned Megadrive version..

The battle for Outworld is over. The human resistance has been eradicated, and with the souls of Liu Kang,Baraka,and Johnny Cage added to his collection, Shao Kahn can finally return to his all-consuming passion: the resurrection of his beloved wife Sindel. After years of searching for a way to bring her back, Shang Tsung's alchemy skills have unearthed a long-forgotten method, which involves taking Sindei's body to Earth. Kahn's assault on Earth is merciless and within days, the planet's once-great cities are shattered shells reminiscent of Kahn's Outworld domain. Using a tear in the dimensional field to power his spell, Tsung succeeds in bringing Sindel to life, and Kahn's conquest continues as he vows to ensnare the souls of everyone on the planet. The game picks up as the cream of humanity's warriors line up to thwart Kahn's plans, entering into another of Kahn's favoured tournaments which see old faces meet new in a battle for the planet...



Don't be fooled by the ponytail, headband and Olympus Sports cut-off top. She's deadly, so she is.



RTAL KOMBAT



SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW...

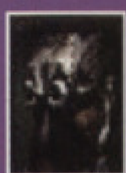
If there's one way to upgrade a game it's to add new characters to it — something Capcom's SF team could do well to remember! For MKIII, Midway offer fourteen playable characters, and a host of hidden opponents, each of whom comes equipped with all-new special moves and Fatalities. And more



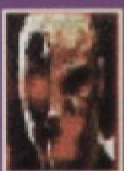
CYRAX: Proving Sektor is also available in green! Bomb-throwing is Cyrax's speciality de la bout, and if this fails he can self-detonate, spreading shrapnel everywhere, before reforming.



JAX: Remember that Fatality where Jax removed the loser's arms? Well, the tables were obviously turned as Jax has returned with two metal arms! Still, they make his older moves more powerful than before.



KABEL: Kahn's new champion replaces him as a character. Dressed up in sink parts, Kabel has a whirlwind move which makes his opponent lose their bearings, and this is usually followed by a powerful fireball.



KANO: The scenario tells of how Kano fled through the portal to Earth, having shed his chains in Kahn's palace. Equipped with laser-powered eyes and a knife, Kano also has a neat line in rolling attacks, and a Fatality which makes his MKI spine-removal looks like a back tickle.



KUNG LAO: The man with the hat is back! Kung Lao's moves have remained pretty much the same as in the second game, but the larger sprites mean his hat toss is far more impressive.



LIU KANG: A new actor has stepped into Kang's pants, but, like Kung Lao, the moves are virtually identical to those of MKII. The gravity-defying bicycle kick is back, but Kang's spinning kick Fatality is now available mid-bout.



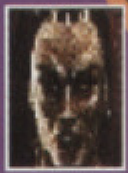
NIGHTWOLF: MKIII's equivalent to T-Hawk, and rather similar to the workings of Johnny Cage. Shadow shoulder barges and an uppercut form the mainstays of his attacks, but a luminous shield also proves handy.



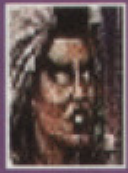
SEKTOR: Just as Reptile, Sub-Zero and Scorpion were the same sprites in different colours, MKIII has a coloured pairing. Sektor is a robotic ninja programmed to destroy Sub-Zero, and plans to do so using a spare set of metal arms he keeps tucked away in his chest unit.



SHANG TSUNG: Kahn's alchemist buddy still has a large supply of skulls to lob around and can morph into any character, but his signature move is a reverse fireball effect where the flames shoot out of the ground instead!



SHEEVA: Goro's female alter-ego, Sheeva has inherited the four-armed one's stomping moves, but has coupled it with a teleport motion to double its effectiveness. She has also retained Goro's fireball and throw capabilities.



SINDEL: Shao Kahn's long-haired bride has one distinct advantage over the rest: she has the ability to fly. In addition to this, she comes armed with fireball attacks, a weird scream attack, and a throw which uses her hair instead of arms.



SONJA: Sonja has come a long way since her days blowing her foes kisses in the original MK, and her moves mimic those of Kitana in MKII. Thankfully, her acrobatic leg throw has also returned.



STRYKER: A member of the SWAT team assigned to ensure Kahn's legions wouldn't make the journey to Earth, Kurtis Stryker has a nightstick used to trip and throw at his foes, and is a bit of an explosive fan on the side.



SUB-ZERO: Gone is the mask, but the freezing moves are back. By far the neatest addition to Sub-Zero's range, though, is an ice clone which appears directly in front of him, and immobilises anything it touches.



SATURN VERSION

The coding for the Saturn version of MKIII is being handled by Midway themselves, and is set for a UK release in April next year courtesy of GT Interactive. There has been much speculation regarding as to when the Satrun would see a conversion thanks to Sony's exclusive deal which will see the first home version of the game debuting on the PlayStation. Midway are planning to port the Sony game's graphics over to the Saturn, and have more time to tinker with the finer intricacies than the PlayStation version. A WIP is imminent, so keep reading...

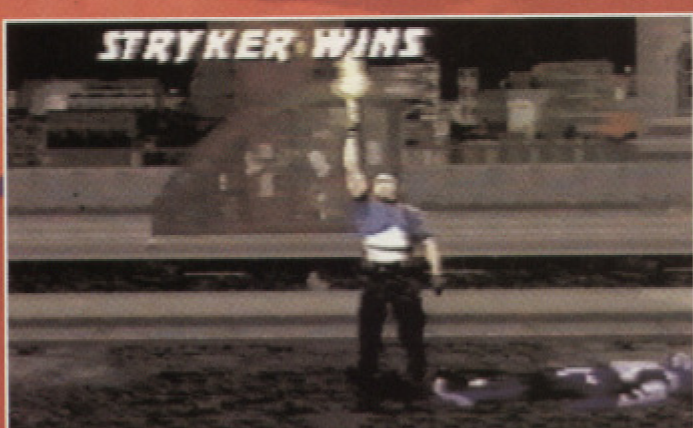
FINISH HIM!

The infamous Fatalities are back with a vengeance in MKIII, but the second game's Babalities and Friendships have been replaced by two new ideas — GET THESE!

FATALITIES: It has to be noted that the overall gore content of MKIII is less than that of the second game. However, each of the fourteen characters has been given two Fatalities, and these include a skeleton-removal trick from Kano and a techno-crush from Cyrax.

ANIMALITIES: Omitted from the second game due to memory limitations, Animalities have finally seen the light of day. Pulling them off is extremely tricky, but the resultant morph sees the victor changing into an animal before pouncing on their stunned opponent.

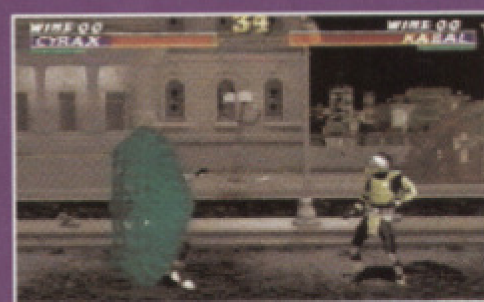
MERCIES: One for the cockier MKIII player. When the 'Finish Him' message appears, pull off a Mercy, and the defeated opponent is given a little extra energy — so you can humiliate them all over again!



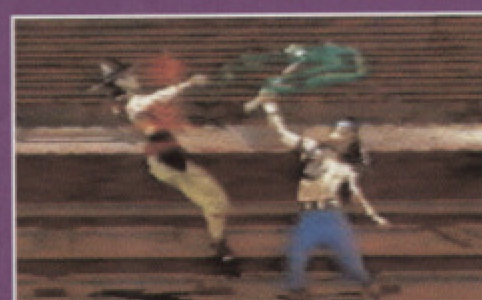


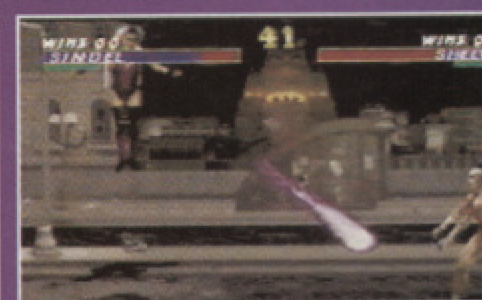
MEGADRIVE VERSION

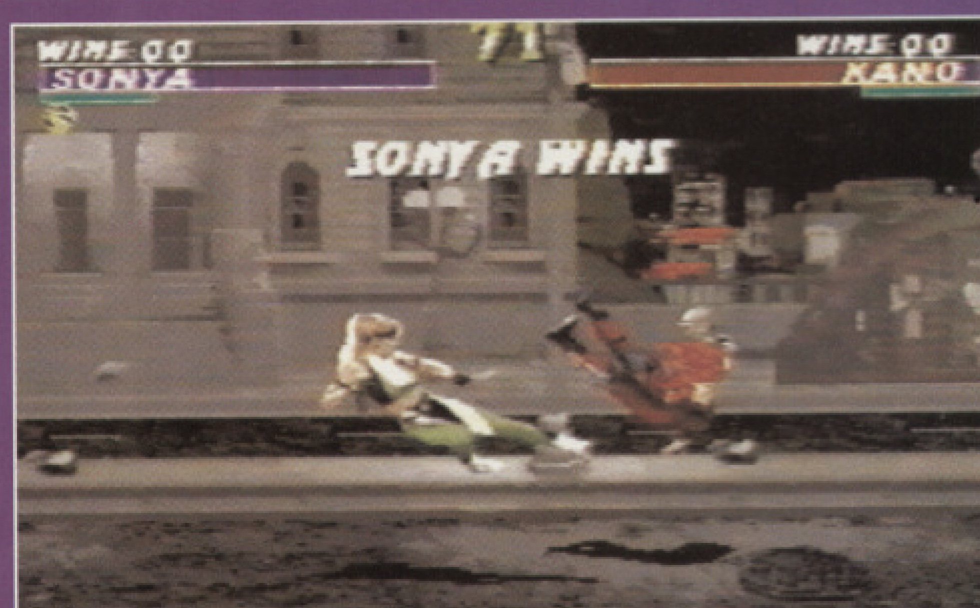
Due to the astronomical cost of producing MEG-heavy Megadrive carts, GT Interactive have passed on releasing a 16bit cart, although there may be a possibility that the game game appears through a secondary licensor. Sculptered Software, the guys behind the Super NES version of MKII are handling the coding duties, and from what we've seen the game looks very nice. The sprites are larger than those of MKII, and all of the backdrops seems to have survived intact. provisionally slated for an October release, let's hope it's snapped up reet soon...



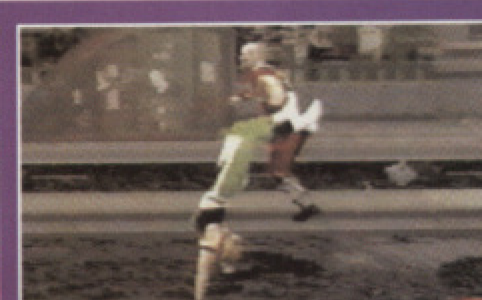




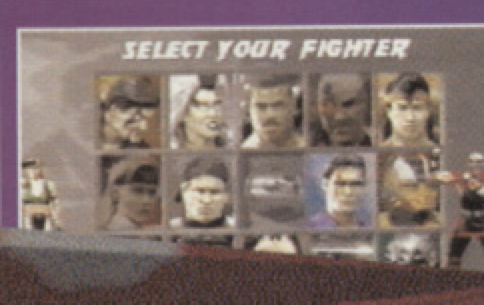












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THE BIG 3

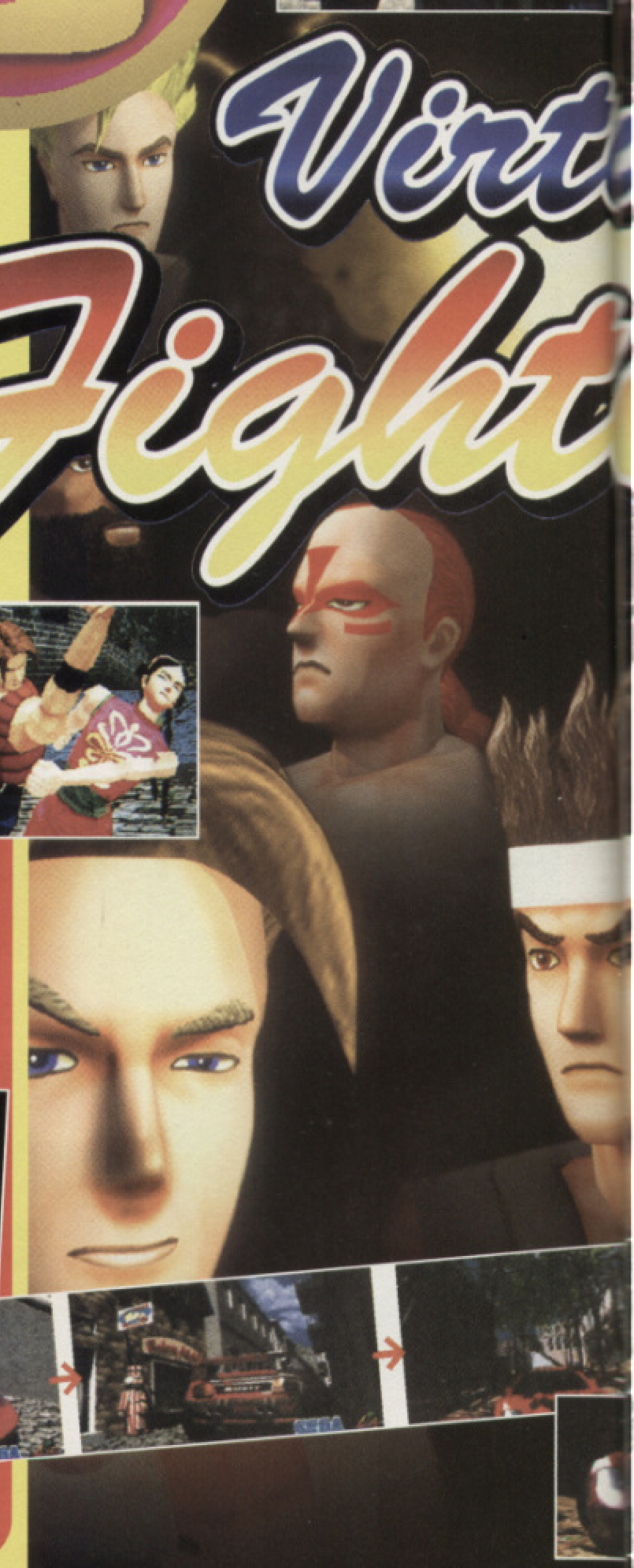


Despite the fact that the game isn't due until the end of the year, coders AM2 have just released the first screenshot of the Saturn conversion of Virtua Fighter 2. And you'll find it reproduced in all its glory on these pages somewhere.

At the end of March, AM2 held a press conference unveiling a new operating system developed to cope with these complicated 3D titles. Now, by using all of the DSP chips and specialised video processors in the Saturn, AM2 are able to produce games that are just as impressive as their PlayStation brethren. The new operating system means that all of the effort has been taken out of the important 3D routines. Now, AM2 can spend more time on the actual design and playability of the game — and it also means that development schedules should be a lot shorter.

But the most important aspect of the new OS is its sheer speed in rendering 3D — Virtua Fighter 2 is going at run at sixty frames a second — that's just as smooth as Tekken on the Sony machine, and indeed, the original Model Two arcade machine. Although some compromises might occur with the backdrops, AM2 are confident that the characters themselves will run just as smooth and as fast as the coin-op originals. The problems for the team at the moment concern the sheer amount of attacks, counter-attacks and throws incorporated for each character. AM2 are aiming for a game that's as close to the original as Virtua Fighter 1 was, so that means that every character's moves have to be included — that's an astounding 2,000 movements per fighter!

Work has progressed since the press conference, and AM2 now have two fully textured, moving characters on-screen at once; Lau and Pai. The real work is going on to compress all those moves. We'll keep you informed every step of the way.



POWER OF THE SATURN

AM2's new operating system isn't just limited to rendering 3D. Included is a mega-impressive full-motion video CinePak routine, which brings new levels of quality to full-screen full-motion video. To demonstrate the point, AM2 showed this demo of Jacky from Virtua Fighter jumping into his car and speeding along at dangerous speeds. These visuals are incredible, and AM2 are hinting are that this is the level of quality we can expect from the forthcoming Virtua Fighter 3 coin-op.







THE FIGHTERS

At the time of writing, only two of these characters have been converted onto the Saturn, but rest assured - all of the eleven fighters from Virtua Fighter 2 are scheduled to appear in the conversion and they should look and move exactly the same as they do in the arcade!



AKIRA YUKI

Supposed to be the best character in Virtua Fighter 1, but turned out to be a bit of a turkey. In VF2, he's been substantially upgraded and is now the best of the best.



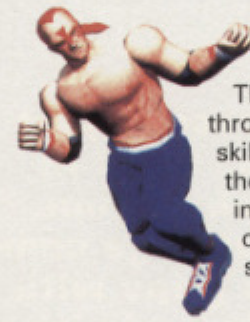
JACKY BRYANT

One of the best all-round fighters from the first game is a tad lacking in the sequel. Jacky's armed with various combination moves and suchlike, but playing him is a chore.



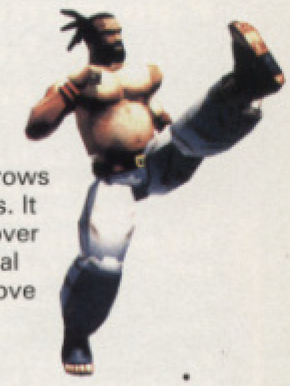
KAGE MARU

Another super-upgraded fighter. Kage couples flashy moves with unstoppable combinations, making him just as unstoppable as Akira. A deadly combatant.



WOLF HAWKFIELD

The character with the best throws has had his basic fighting skills beefed up a tad, but they're just a means of getting in close before finishing them off with a terrifying throw of some description.



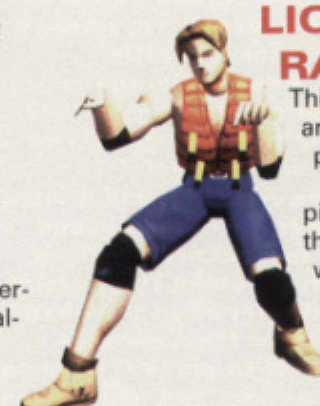
JEFFRY MCWILD

He's a bit faster than old Wolf and again, he concentrates on throws as his speciality moves. It takes him ages to recover from performing special moves — one false move and he's history.



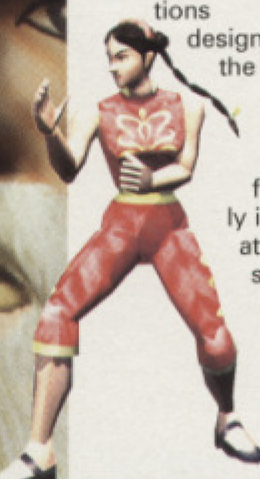
LAU CHAN

The undisputed champion of Virtua Fighter 1 returns with even more annoying combinations designed to get you out of the ring in minimum time.



LION RAFALE

This new character is a French aristocrat who's mastered prAying mantis kung fu. Favourite habits include tripping you over and smashing the living daylights out of you whilst you're there.



PAI CHAN

Defence is the most powerful form of attack — especially in Pai's case. Her counter-attacks are brilliant and she's one of the fastest characters in the game.



SHUN DI

Another new character. This sprightly 83-year-old martial arts instructor is totally unpredictable and extremely deadly — odd considering that he's totally drunk for the entire fighting duration.





SARAH BRYANT

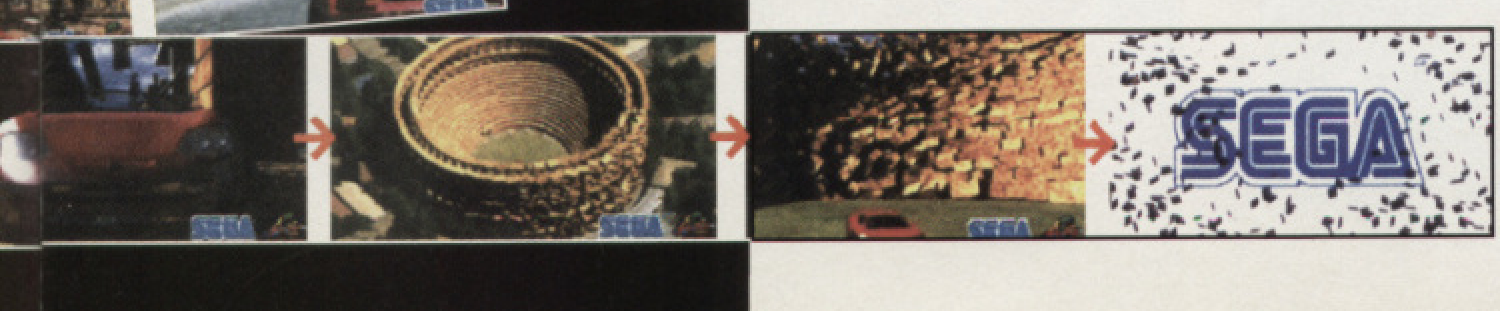
Take one of the most powerful fighters of Virtua Fighter 1 and give her extra speed and deadlier moves. The result? An incredibly aggressive combatant who's awesome in the right hands.



DURAL

A robot designed to replicate Kage's mother, Dural returns as the bonus character at the end of the game... only this time you fight her underwater. A cheat exists in the coin-op to play as Dural.





THE BIG 3



In this, the second part of our exclusive work in progress look at Time Warner's Primal Rage conversion, we get to grips with dino sprites, tiny primitives, and the first picture of the Saturn version...



The story so far...
Centuries back, before humans had emerged from the primordial slime, there was rage. As life on Earth grew and multiplied into new intelligent forms, the need to feed and ensure the continuation of a bloodline lead to the destruction of those weaker beings. Such primitive instincts created deities based on the spirits of hunger, life, death, survival and decay — continuing the eternal battle between good and evil. Eventually, the energy generated by the human creatures who worshipped them gave body to these gods, and they took the form of mighty beasts.
With tooth and claw, the reptilian and simian gods did fight, until there were only seven left. Each of the seven had secured a place on Earth and were ready to stake their claim on the next, but fate intervened in the shape of Balsafas — a wise leader from another dimension. He cast a spell to place the seven gods in suspended animation, and gave homo sapiens the chance to become the dominant species.
However, times change and spells do not last forever, and when the human race had been partially wiped out by a colliding meteor which left the world in ruins, it was an appropriate time for the gods to return and continue their plans for domination over the new 'Urth'...



SATURN VERSION FIRST PICTURE!

Just for your delectation we are proud to present the first screenshot of the forthcoming Saturn version! Although at an extremely early stage, Probe are confident that the 32bit versions will be virtually arcade-perfect. None of the Megadrive restrictions regarding backdrops apply, ensuring a large graphics palette and full animation details, and the character sprites will be roughly 80% as tall as their arcade counterparts. Probe are leading with the Sony PlayStation version and porting the graphics and code to the Saturn as and when new additions are made. Primal Rage on the Saturn is heading for a September release to tie in with the machine's official launch.





URTH-A KITT

Primal offer seven combatants, each of whom comes equipped with a cluster of special moves and Fatalities. Not to mention a couple of extras hidden within the fighting code...



CHAOS: A monkey mangler, Chaos has the worst bodily habits this size of Mickey Methane (a man who specialises in lighting his farts and shooting peas from his bum-hole). The expert's choice because of his speed and power, keep an eye out for his 'Fart of Fury' and 'Power Puke' moves.



SAURON: A good all-rounder and the best character for combo usage. His relatively small size makes him perfect for leaping attacks, and his 'Primal Scream' is more painful than the group of the same name.



BLIZZARD: Hailing from the arctic wastes, Blizzard is the second simian entry and is Primal's equivalent to good old Sub-Zero. He has the ability to freeze foes with his chilly breath and pull huge ice geysers from nowhere which spike the ringpiece of any unfortunate foes.



TALON: The fastest of all the characters, but sadly he lacks any projectile moves. His name comes from the sharp claws he wields which offer the player a shredding fatality which reduces their opponent to mince.



VERTIGO: A cross between a Cobra and the long-necked Diplodicus makes for a devastating combination. Her long neck allows for distant attacks, and the snake genes means she spits venom with ease. Perfect for the novice Rager...



ARMADON: A cross-breed between a Triceratops and countless other spiky dinos, and is significantly weaker than the likes of Sauron and Vertigo, but his spiked back makes his special moves the most devastating in the game — particularly the incredible 'Iron Maiden' jump attack.



DIABLO: Weedy at close-range fighting, Diablo's Inferno setting ensures he packs several fire-related special moves. Fireballs and torches are the most visually impressive, but his incinerating Fatality makes them look like a lit fart.

HIDDEN DETAILS

The Primal coin-op is stacked with neat little touches, and Probe are aiming to recreate as many as possible for the Megadrive conversion. As with their MKII conversion, every Fatality and special move has been incorporated, and whilst there are less natives than in the coin-op (due to the way the large dino sprites slow down when too many are on screen), it is still possible to flick them in the air and eat them for extra energy. Die-hard fans of the coin-op may also be familiar with a bowling cheat which lurks within Armadon's level. We're not telling you how to do it (yet!), but there's a special move which wraps Armadon's spiky frame into a ball, sets up a load of skittles and allows the player to use him as an oversized bowling ball!



PRIMAL RAGE

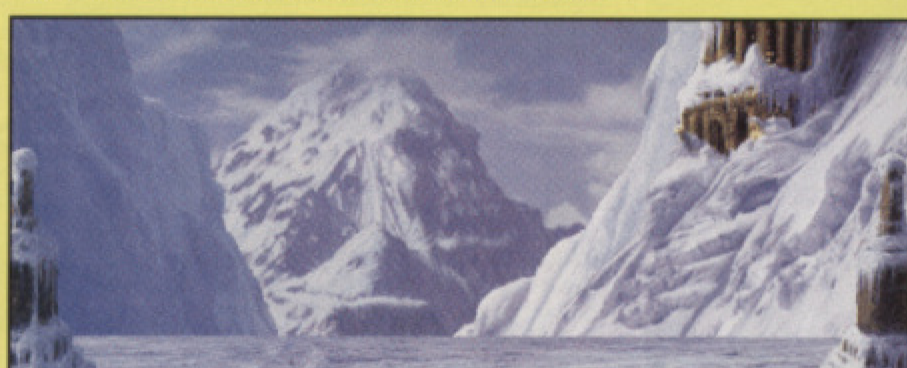


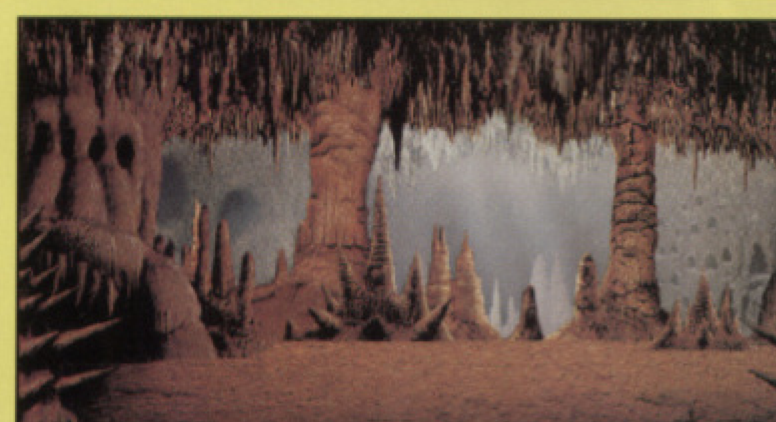


SETTING THE SCENE

With each character presiding over a different part of the new 'Urth', as such seven backdrops play host to the monster moshing — for example, Diablo's fiery breath is perfectly suited to his volcanic domain, whilst Blizzard swings completely opposite and hails from a snowy wasteland. Each of these lands features a number of primitives who worship the home team, and one of Probe's greatest nightmares was compressing the backdrops down into the 24MEG Megadrive cart. Each of the coin-op's backdrop is fully animated with trees moving, skies and seas rolling, and the said natives running around, and recreating this on the Megadrive involved several technical 'cheats.' Sauron's Cove level proves the hardest as it features a scrolling sky which dips into the horizon. If this was to be ported to the Megadrive, the moving sky would slow the movement of the central sprites. As such, Probe's artists redrew the sky from scratch adding a definite horizon which doesn't get in the way of the sprite animations. Better still, it's barely noticeable...

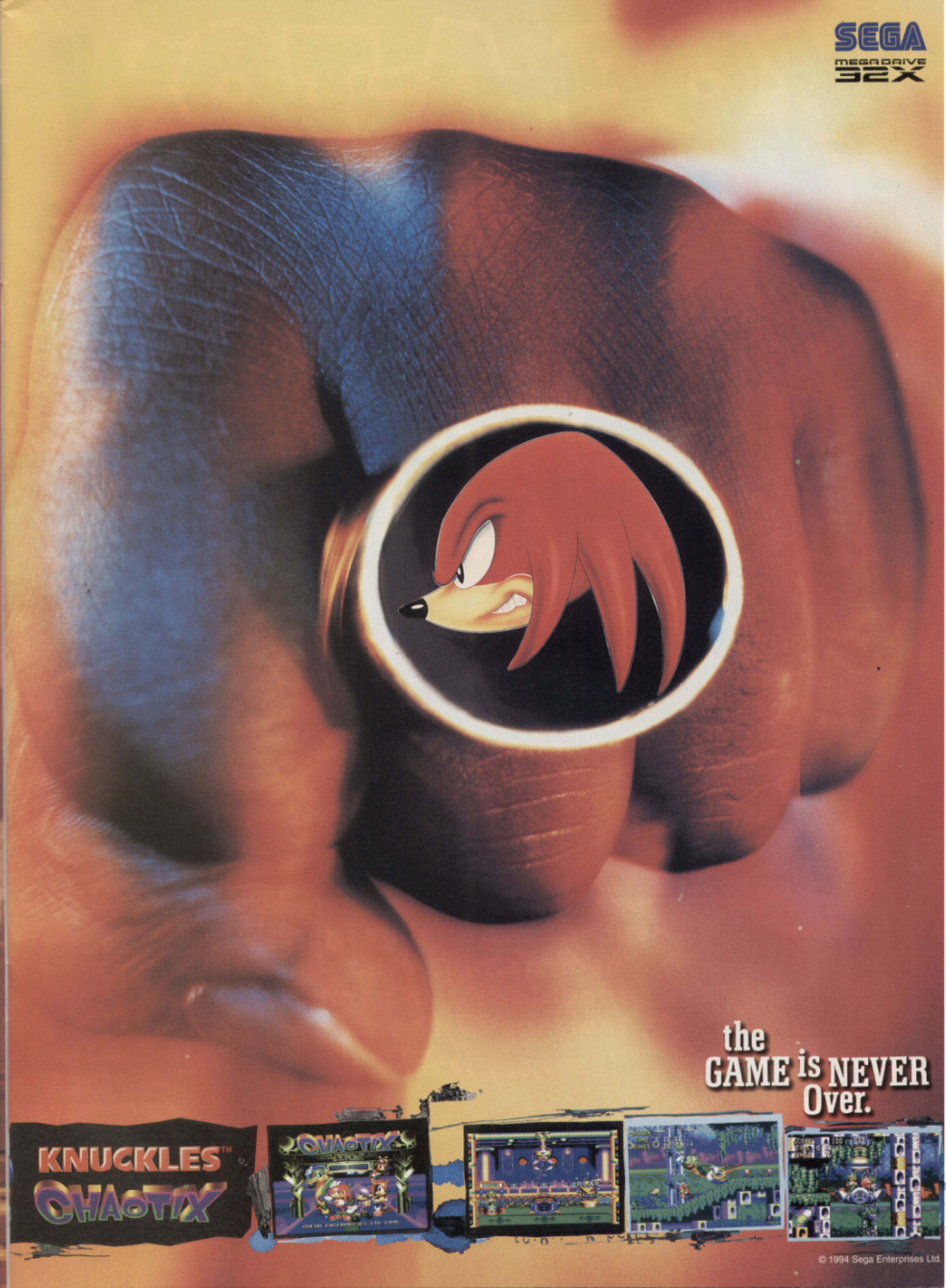


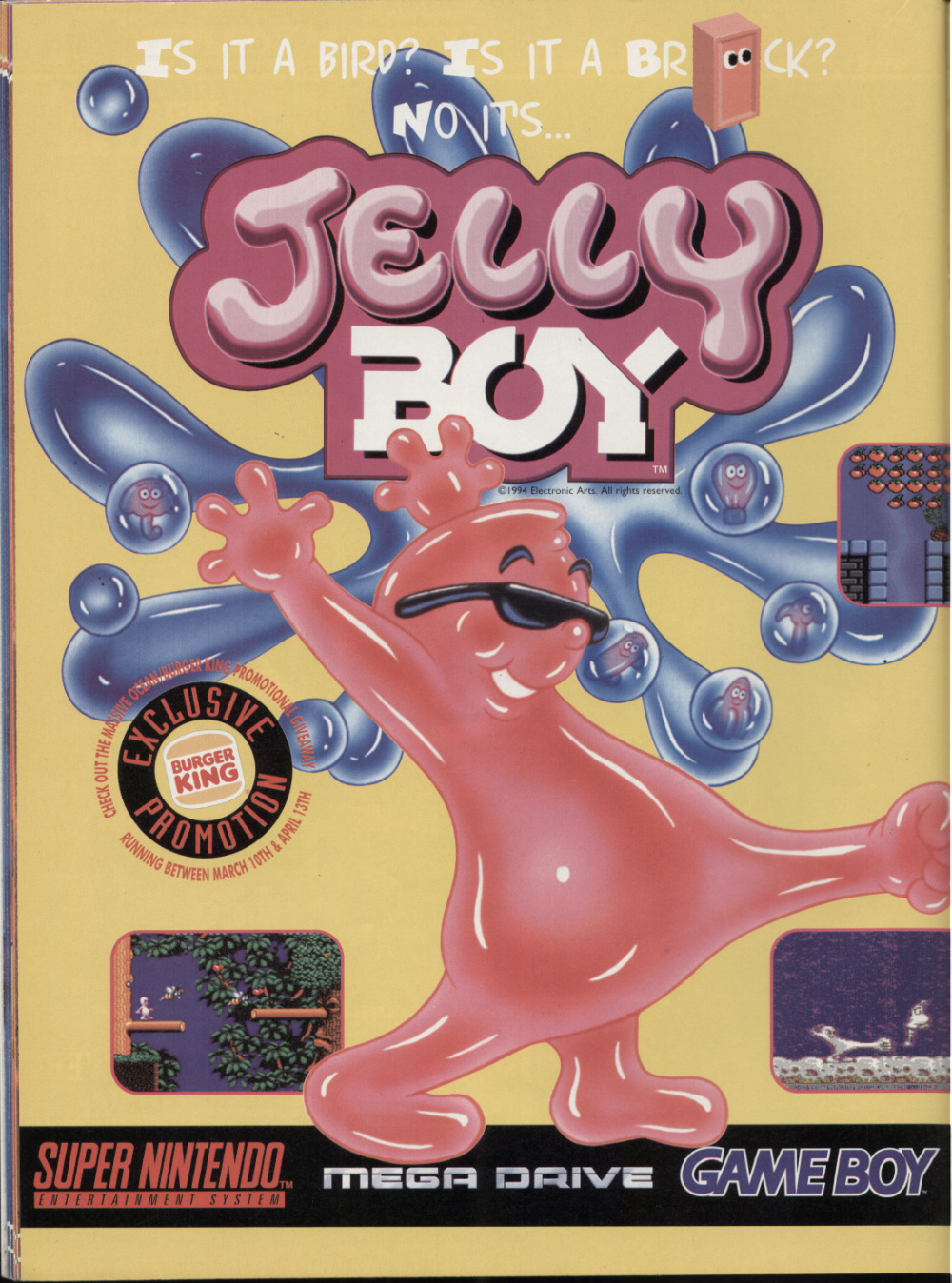


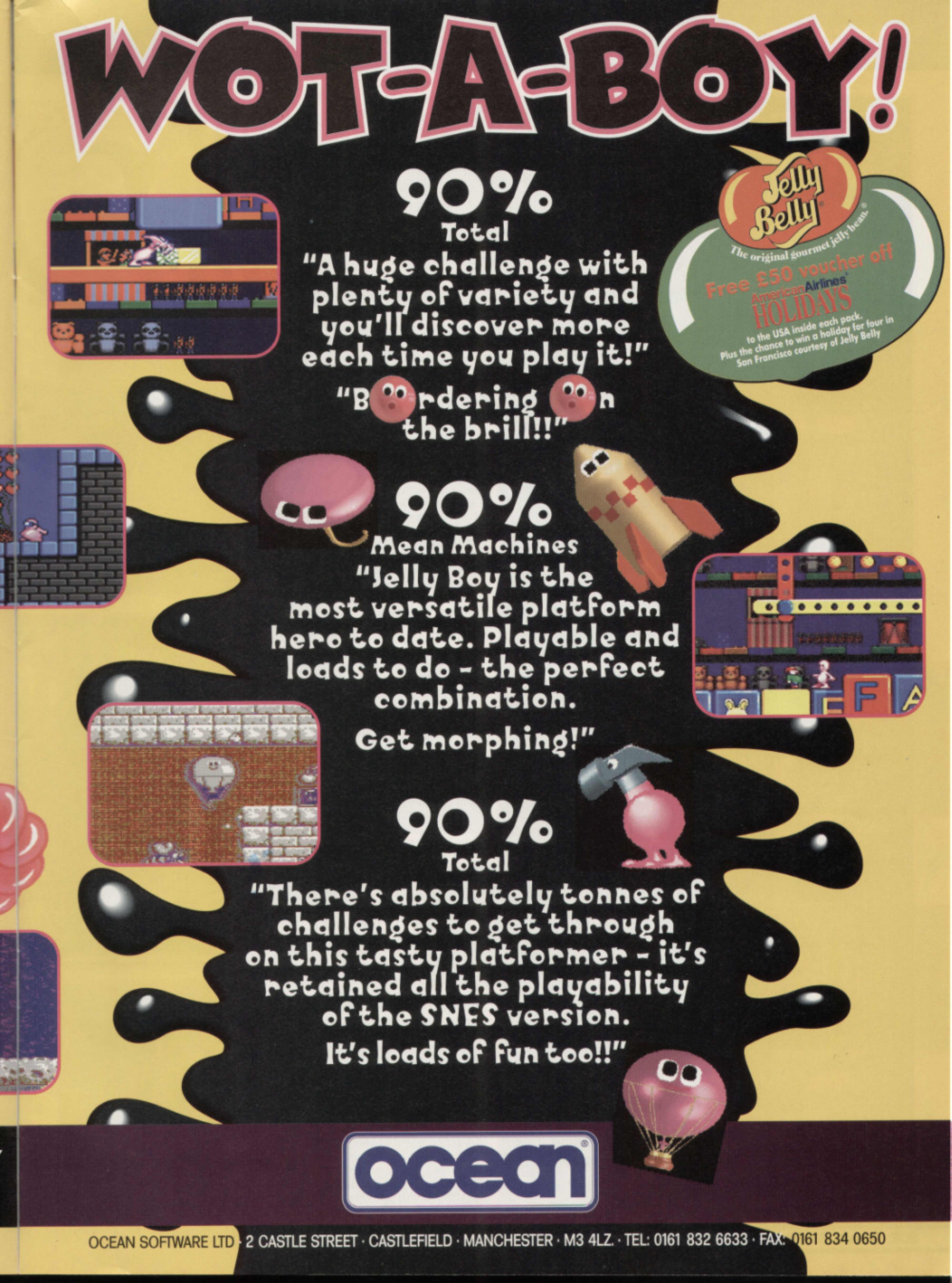







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WORK IN PROGRESS

SHINO

What happened to the ninjas? Once it was Three Ninjas this, Last Ninjas that, even kiddie ninjas. Gus looked into the coming ninja revival — led by the grandaddy of them all.

PROJECT	SHINOBI X
PUBLISHER	SEGA
INTIATIATED	APRIL '94
RELEASE	SUMMER '95
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	SEGA

Sega have been putting together Joe Musashi's comeback for longer than most Saturn games. The return of Shinobi was a pretty inevitable event, as the ninja games have been big hits on all Sega's other formats (apart from 32X and Mega-CD). In fact, the Revenge of Shinobi game has a place in the Megadrive Hall of Fame, with a massive 94% when it first arrived. It's still pretty playable.

Sega set out to produce a new Shinobi, showing off the Saturn's amazing graphic capabilities, but retaining very familiar gameplay elements of the previous titles; Lots and lots of side-scrolling, shuriken-flinging action, with the odd bit of ninja magic thrown in. At first play, on this admittedly early version, it all seems very reminiscent of the previous games, especially Revenge, but this is probably no bad thing.

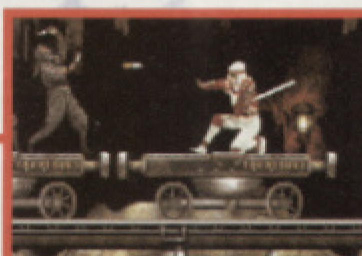
The thing is, the Saturn is suffering from the lack of a really playable platform game at the moment, and although these shots of Shinobi X might not astound in the same way as Clockwork Knight and Astal, you can bet your boots it's going to play a lot better. Joe is already shaping up as pretty athletic. He has a combination of jumping, sword and shuriken moves. Allowing him to parry the opponent's attacks, or launch a blistering set of moves. The enemies also show a high degree of intelligence — taking account of Musashi's moves instead of blind patrolling. There's also nice bits of gore with baddies being hacked into bloody pieces with your samurai sword. The seriousness with which this update is being handled is shown by the fact it has already been held up from a March release, as Sega seek to get it just right. Shinobi is set to ship this summer, and looks like being an A-list title.







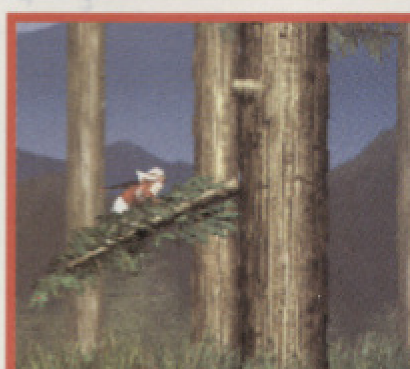
Joe seems to be having a few stomach cramps.



Fighting for the last unreserved seats in standard class.



Who knows the secret of the Ninja magic box.



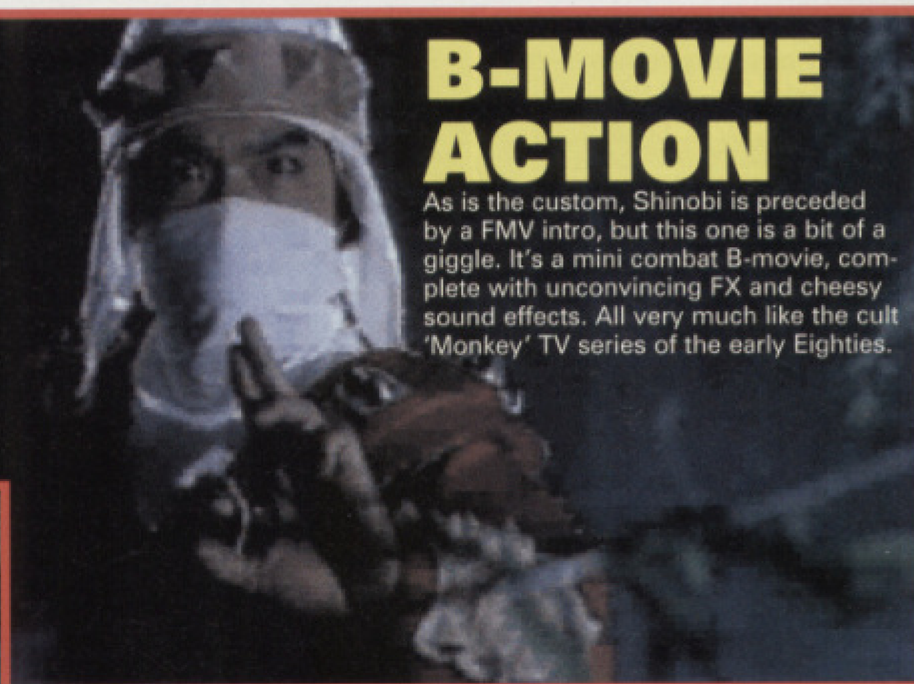
Tree climbing can be dangerous kids. Remember that.

BI-X



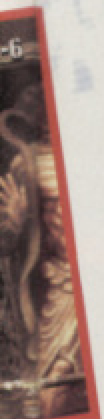
B-MOVIE ACTION

As is the custom, Shinobi is preceded by a FMV intro, but this one is a bit of a giggle. It's a mini combat B-movie, complete with unconvincing FX and cheesy sound effects. All very much like the cult 'Monkey' TV series of the early Eighties.





Spook effects, as Joe rummages through the dirty mind of a baddie.

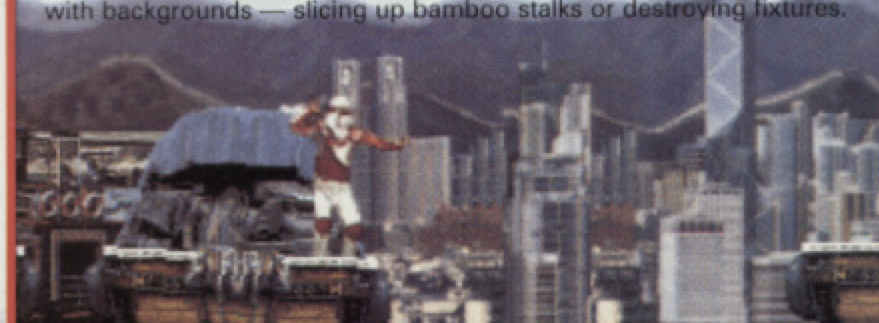




It's shurikens akimbo from the first level.

PHOTO REALISM

Shinobi's graphics have the distinctive texture of digitised photos. The stonework buildings and sprites look very much like photographs and footage of filmed actors overlayed, but with a smoothness and clarity surpassing anything seen before. In the background of one stage is a pixel-perfect skyline of Hong Kong! It's possible to interact with backgrounds — slicing up bamboo stalks or destroying fixtures.



LIFE OF JOE

To give you some background on the impact of Sega's ninja character, we give a brief recount of Joe Musashi's previous outings.

SHINOBI (MASTER SYSTEM)

Looks incredibly simplistic, but remains one of the best games on the system. Spawned all sorts of imitations like Ninja Gaiden. The Shinobi games arose out of an old Data East coin-op called Dragon Master.



REVENGE OF SHINOBI (MEGADRIVE)

Revenge took the Megadrive world by storm. Technically it still holds up against newer games. Brilliant effects and superb gameplay.



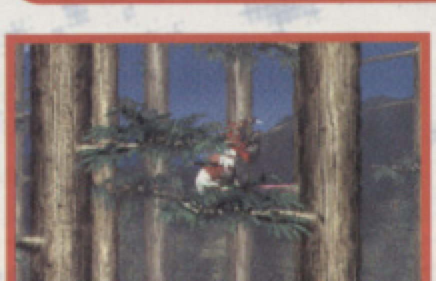
SHADOW DANCER (MEGADRIVE)

A follow-up on cart, and also in the arcades. Joe now has a wolf companion, but despite some trickery, the game fails to match the heights of the predecessor.

SHINOBI III (MEGADRIVE)

Controversy here. Shinobi III was actually reprogrammed on the strength of MEAN MACHINES' review, and appeared some eight months later. It's a good game and has more variety than Revenge, but isn't quite as memorable.







PROJECT	GRAND CHASER
PUBLISHER	SEGA
INTIATIATED	JULY '94
RELEASE	SEPTEMBER '95
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	SEGA (JAPAN)

With the explosive release of Daytona USA, any other racer is condemned to chase the AM2 dragon. Or are they? With Grand Chaser, Gus sees racing heading in a new direction.

It's a myth to believe that new machines automatically means better games, as Gale Racer, one of the first and most pitiful of Saturn releases ably demonstrated. Even with hardware back-up like the Saturn's (perhaps especially with) programming ingenuity and skill are the most important elements of a game's success.

Sega have been putting together Grand Chaser as an original futuristic racer. No license, no expectant arcade following, but it does possess one big advantage over Daytona USA — an on-board, split-screen two-player mode, which is already functional.

And it has one other thing: weapons. An element of vicarious destruction is added to the challenge of driving, adding a deadly edge to your various game competitors. The armament element is one not yet fully developed in the game, as only the most basic of missile weapons is as yet installed, but it sets the game apart from recent earthbound racers, placing it as a successor to the old Atari coin-op Roadblasters, the SNES classic F-Zero, as well as bearing a strong resemblance to Crystal Dynamics' 3DO game, Crash and Burn.

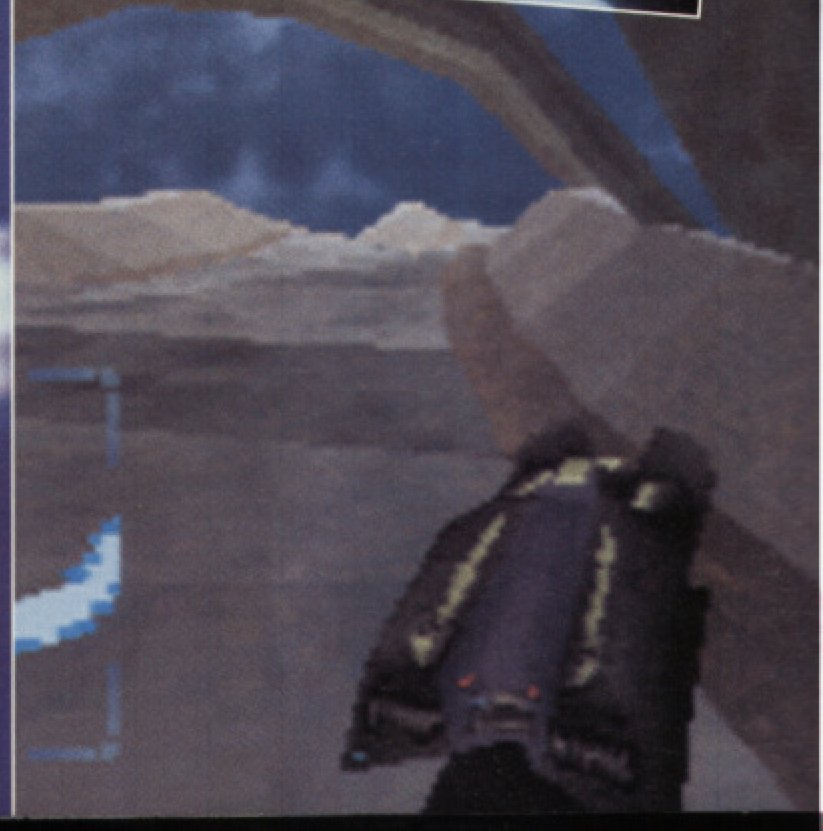
Sega Japan have almost completed the game, which has an import release date of late May. The version presented to us at Sega UK was assembled a couple of months previously, the normal delay for most Saturn games making their way to Europe. So much was still to be done in terms of gameplay, even though the graphics may seem surprisingly polished. Grand Chaser is likely to be one of the first official Saturn titles in September, but we'll have the import review well in advance of that — next issue, in fact.

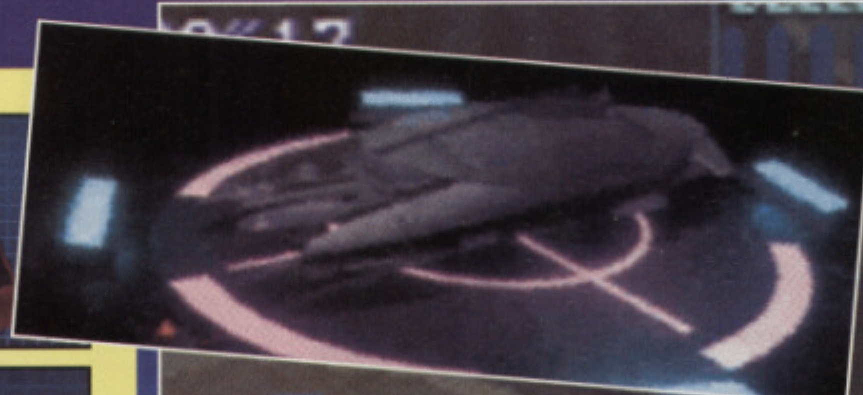




SISTER SLEDGE

Since this is set in the future (wheels being declared uncool sometime in the C21) you pick from a selection of sleds, which float above the road surface. Incidentally, since when did 'sledge' become 'sled'? When I were a nipper, we took our sledges out to the local hill in't winter. The loss of the 'ge' is just another small loss in the quality of life. Anyway, these five sleds have been designed to offer a variety of driving experiences. They also have different levels of armour, which is important when someone is shooting at you. At the moment, the basis of a complex sled customisation process is underway, with the internal parts of the vehicle — transmission etc. shown as rotating polygons. Most things in this game come as polygons. The sleds rotate on the selection screen in that Introducing-the-new-Ford-at-the-Motor-Show style beloved of most next gen racers.

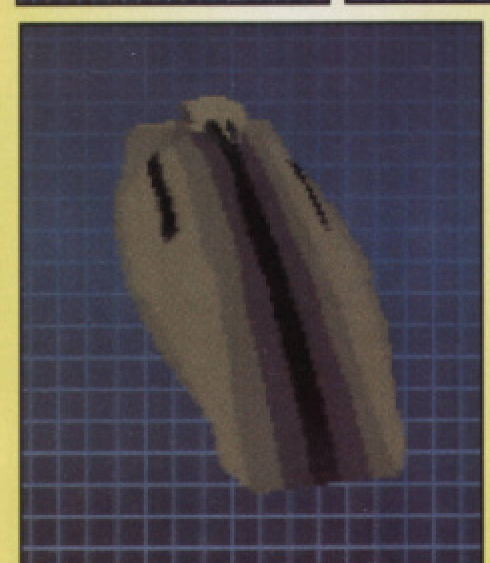












Note the centre mounted zip entry system.



This is the meaty one with lots of armour.





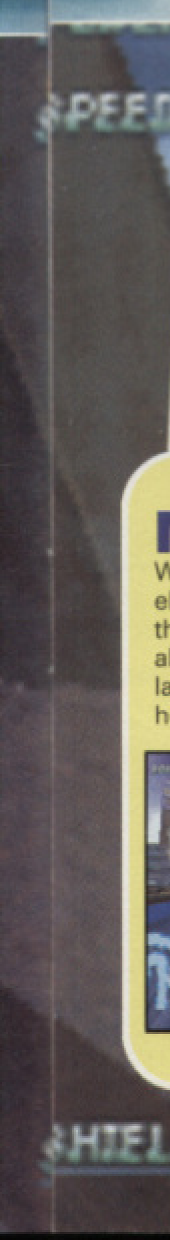
FLOCK WALLPAPER

Texture-mapping raises its head once again in Grand Chaser. This particularly well-worn piece of Edge-reader jargon describes the use of bitmap designs to cover flat polygon surfaces to give greater detail and realism. The untextured polygons of Virtua Fighter and Virtua Racing look artificial next to those of Virtua Fighter 2 and Sega Rally. Think of it as a bit like wallpapering the set of Cell Block H. The technique is used in Grand Chaser to contrast the five different racing worlds upon which the tournaments take place.





CHASER



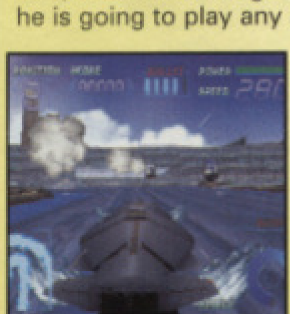






MEZZANINE RACING

Within a much-explored genre, it's gratifying to see some original thinking in Grand Chaser. Some of the layouts have paths running at different levels, with a narrow optimum route rising above the slower main surface of the playing area. There are various split-level tracks, the most notable being the hot world, which has a horrible fiery trench arrangement that decimates your shield, placed right at the start/finish line. Landscape features are also not lacking, with an eye-catching waterfall on the very first track. The layout makes the most of the feature, taking the course through a watery lake, and then through an arching bend in a chamber behind the waterfall. Oh, and there's a flying dragon on the sky world, but Sega are unsure if he is going to play any active part in the game.













SLED ON SLED ACTION

One of the last, and consequently unfinished, features of the game is the two-player mode. It's split-screen, you know, University Challenge style, across the ten courses of the 'story mode' game. Normally, the tricky part of such split-screen modes is keeping the scenic detail of the full-screen mode in each of the windows (effectively doubling the workload on the CPU). This seems to have been achieved with Grand Chaser, but the update is suffering as a result at present, making the race look jerky and difficult to control. Bear in mind this was an early 1995 version.








DODGY NAMES — FILE UNDER HERE

In Japan this game is coming out as Gran Chaser. Of course, such a silly thing could never happen here, and Sega moved quickly to add a face-saving 'd'. But why do the japs have this thing about messing around with the English language? We give our own ideas at what recent titles suggest:

GRAN CHASER

Suggests:Racing game where OAP contenders select from various electric kerb-crawler shoppers and three-wheeled pedestrian terrorisers. Alternative title: Coffin Dodg 'ems.
Actualité:Futuristic polygon racer for the Saturn.

PRO LEZ ACTION

Suggests:Wrestling game pitting Family Fortunes and Price is Right hosts in battle, or Beth Jordache vs. the Band of Gold tag-team.
Actualité:Erm, it does exactly what is says on the tin.

SUPER TRAMP CHASER

Suggests:As provisions buyer for a large burger chain you go in search of 'cheap meat on the streets', armed only with a sharpened brolly. Sponsor: The Big Issue.
Actualité:We haven't a clue, sorry.

PRETTY SOLDIER SAILOR MOON

Suggests:Members of armed forces in arse-exposed, possibly court martial-worthy incident. Alternative title:Pretty Policeman Super Truncheon.
Actualité:Crappy SNES/Saturn beat 'em up.

ALONE IN THE DARK

Alternative title:Crispy duvet — sniiiiiip! Enough examples, already.



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PROJECT	SOULSTAR X
PUBLISHER	CORE
INTIATIATED	MARCH '95
RELEASE	AUTUMN '95
FORMAT	32X
DEVELOPERS	CORE

Gus thought he had driven off those malicious Myrkoids of Soulstar for good with his toilet duck and Shake 'n' Vac bombs. However, a telex from Core HQ brought some ominous news...



They are most definitely coming back. The cold-hearted alien hordes of Myrkoids, that is. Core concocted the original story for the Mega-CD shoot 'em up last year, using a 3-D manipulation engine that deservedly won them plaudits for attempting to produce original effects out of the Mega-CD.

Now the struggling with the limitations of the ASIC chip are done with, and Core are turning to the new challenges posed by those two Hitachi processors found in the 32X. Soulstar has been stripped down to its fundamental ideas — 24 levels of action set in and around a vast, hostile space station that has come to suck Earth dry. The big question is, will they get here before the Tories finish the job? (bit of politics, mate).

The designers point to the varying challenges set by linear 3D shooting levels and hi-tech 'copter and Walker exploration levels. But just in case that fails to whet the appetite sufficiently, they've included some lovely renderings that suggest the game will look a treat.

These are definitely the latest pics of the game, hot off the disk duplicator, though some previous publicity renderings were printed as previews in some doltish quarters. We think not. However, the delay in Soulstar X, and some other 32X Core stuff is down to work being concentrated on the PC CD-ROM versions, which commenced first. But as they are being compiled in 'C', a language similar to that used by 32X programs, the wait shouldn't be too long.

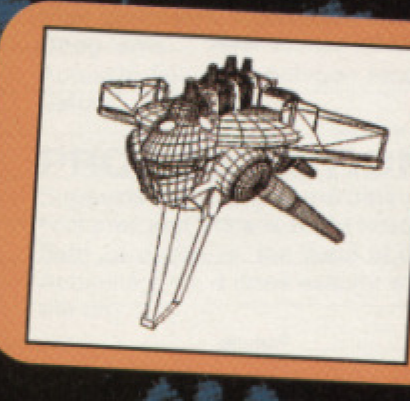


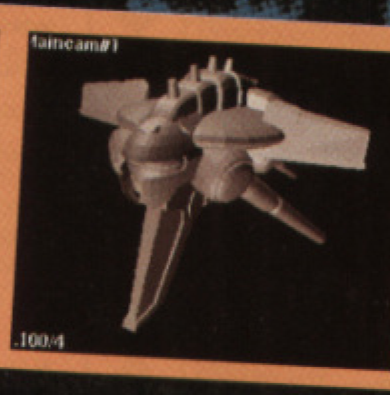
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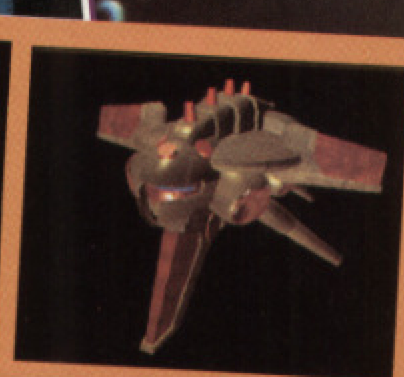
Core have concentrated on a two-player mode to add some cooperative interest to what was originally a rather lonely space epic. The plan is to give one person jurisdiction over weapon while the other unwraps their sweets and misses the right turn-offs. Well actually, instead of mere navigational duties, the second player controls the devolution of power in your space-craft, allowing you deal with damage problems in a tactical fashion.





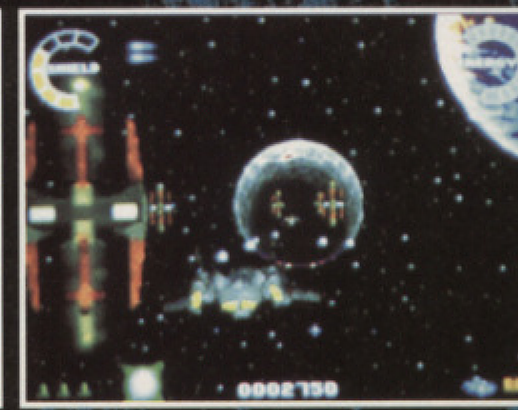


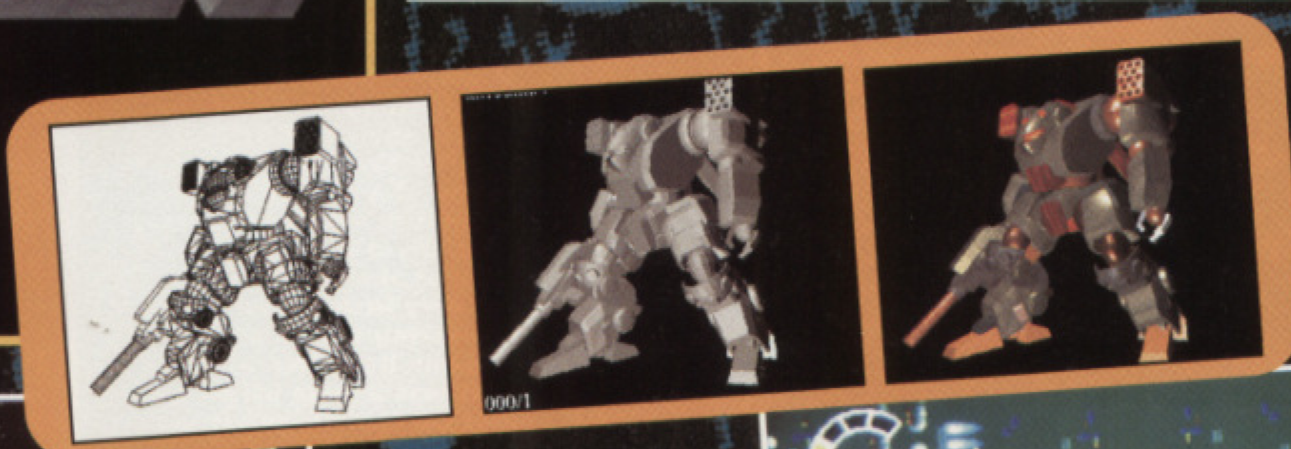




















YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED

All Soulstar X's ships and baddies have been rendered on Silicon Graphics workstations. Rapidly becoming the standard process for 32bit games, SGI are high-end computers, starting at around £2000, supported by their own custom software. They render images — turn them into 3-D representations which are then simplified for inclusion in the game. These shots show three progressive stages of rendering:

WIRE FRAME

The simplest render that marks the dimension of the object without giving it any surface or texture. Images can be created and manipulated quickly, so this render is used at the design stage.

QUICK SHADING

This render gives the image a solidity by assigning a colour to each of its surfaces. The colours vary in their relation to imagined light sources shining onto the object. Used at the advanced design stage.

RAY TRACING

An advanced render that applies textures and details to the surfaces and advanced light-sourcing effects like reflections and refractions or transparencies. Images are photo-realistic. These are images in their final



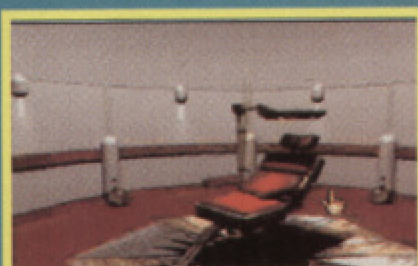
PREVIEWS



BY: SUNSOFT
GAME TYPE: ADVENTURE
PRICE: TBA
RELEASE: TBA
1 PLAYERS
COMPLETE

Ahen the small American programming team of Cyan set out to create Myst, they took a different tack to most games created in the last ten years. Written originally for the Apple Macintosh CD-ROM, Myst is an epic adventure, paying homage to the best traditions of adventure game writers like Infocom, and the modern point-and-click interface of Lucasfilm. However, the four-year original project produced something quite different in character to any computer adventure that had gone before. Instead of a cheesy adventure plot in a cliched fantasy world, Myst is set on a series of abstract islands, with very little initial plot — discovering that is part of the game itself. Needless to say it was a huge hit on computer CD format, and is set to extend its classic status with a host of console CD editions. An import Saturn version is already available, but Sunsoft's Mega-CD version will be the first English language console version in the UK.**

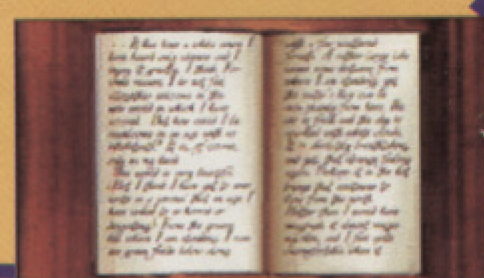




I can feel my fillings tingling at thew sight of this.

TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

The first island is a pivotal point of the adventure. At its heart is a library. Many of the books are charred, but the remaining journals offer invaluable assistance. Next to the library is a personal planetarium, which will display constellations for pre-programmed dates.



THE GYRE MYSTERY

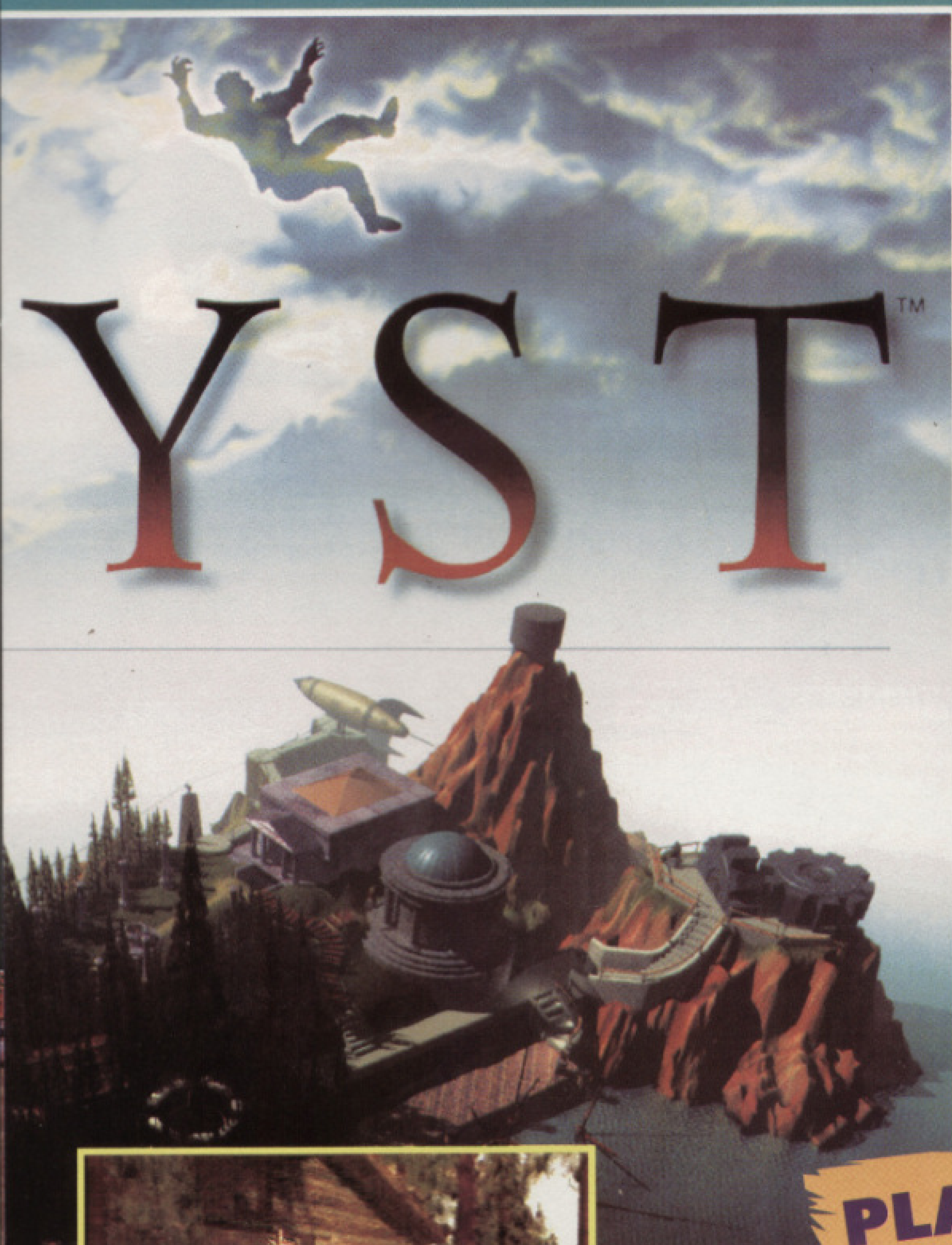




A strange picture, with more than aesthetic purpose.

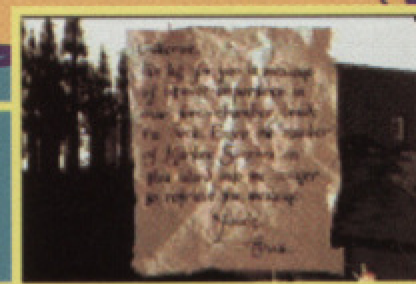


God, a door — how fascinating , Oz.



OPEN YOUR MIND

Myst as a game is entirely puzzle-driven. There are no guns, no 'baddies', no deaths and no credits. Success is measured in progress. Progress is made when you reach an unattainable place or work out the purpose for one of the many machines you reach. Although the puzzles are complex, the control is a simple point and click interface. The graphics don't scroll, but are made up by a series of locations the screen flicks to.



A crumpled note of deceptive significance.



Someone tried to boost the tourist trade by adding a large cog to this scenic viewing point.



Home of the three bears?

PLAY MYSTY FOR ME

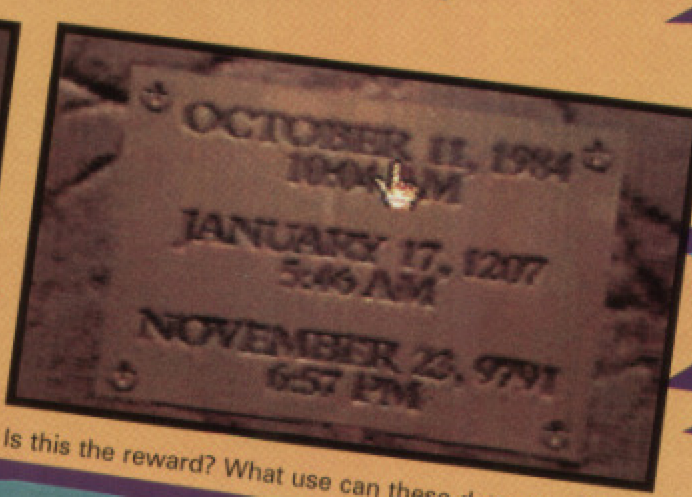
Myst has been converted from the original Mac game which took the Cyan team four years to design, render and assemble. A multi-media demo of the 'making of Myst' is hidden on the CD.



Cogs, cgos, everywhere is cogs in this game.



The tower mechanism leads you to this upper level.



Is this the reward? What use can these dates have?





BY	INFOGRAMES
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM
RELEASE	JUNE
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1
MEG	16
COMPLETE	

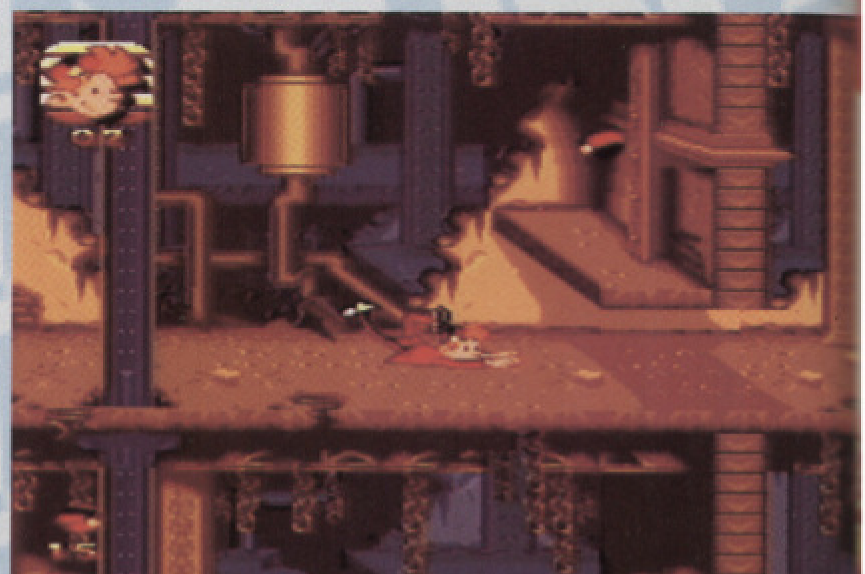
SPi

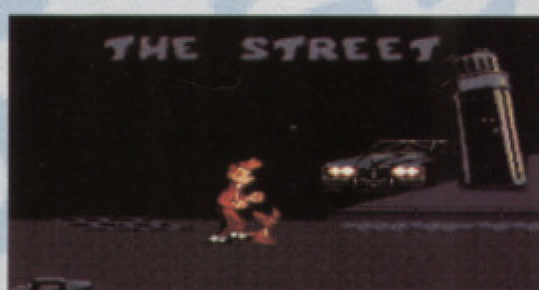
French 'maison de software' Infogrames seem to make an industry out of creating unlikely platform stars. Earlier this year, Les Schtroumps (Smurfs to you and me) got the treatment, now it's the turn of Spirou, a hotel bellboy with a penchant for adventure. And a pet squirrel.

Spirou adapts surprisingly well to the globe-trotting nature of this sprawling platform game, considering he never leaves an eight by eight foot elevator most days. But needs must, as the evil works of a wicked female baddie threaten the entire world. How typically enlightened of our continental amis to be gender-blind when it comes to dastardliness.

Spirou, the Megadrive cart, is being timed to coincide with Spirou, the TV cartoon show, starting its run on the much-watched Children's Channel in June. Originating from France, the show hopes to have similar success on this side of the Channel, with Infogrames reputation for high-quality animation being put to the test in the licensed game.

The game's graphics, level layouts and presentation are all in place, with only the final tweakings of gameplay under consideration. At the moment, Infogrames claim it's 'very hard' and the intention is to maintain the level of challenge. All in all, Spirou is looking like an effective warm-up for Infogrames' other big summer platformer, Tintin in Tibet.









FURRY FOREST FRIENDS

For some obscure reason (the cartoon probably revealing all) Spirou is followed around by a squirrel. One of the cuddly red kind, not the pestilential grey variety. In any case, it seems to know its way around the layouts, so following its cues chooses the best route to take. Spirou enters doorways, walking into the screen, to reach further parts of the levels.



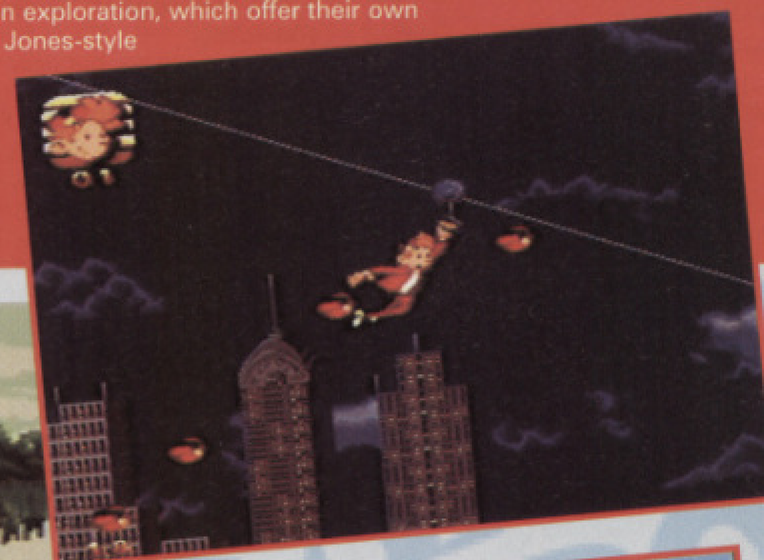




ROU

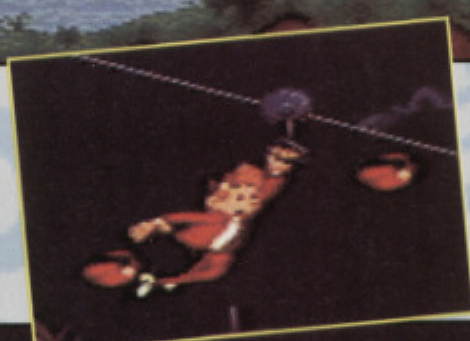
RAIDERS OF THE LAST CLICHÉ

Desparate to avoid the twin charges of unoriginality and lack of variety, Infogrames take Spirou across the world, from forest to swamp to catacomb, and give him a variety of tasks to perform. Sometimes its clinging to hooks on a series of aerial runways, or piloting a bubble-jet in a mid game shoot 'em up sojourn. Swimming levels rub shoulders with dungeon exploration, which offer their own Indiana Jones-style challenges.



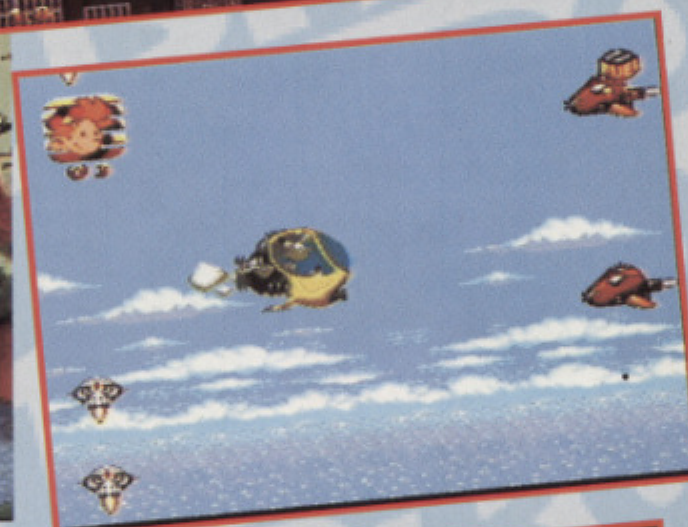










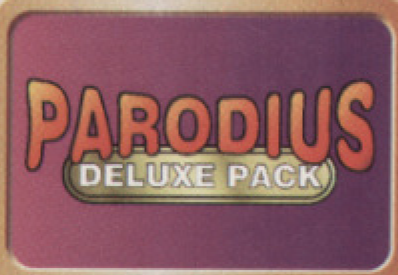






PARODIUS DELUXE PACK

BY	KONAMI
GAME TYPE	SHOOT EM UP
PRICE	TBA
RELEASE	MAY (IMPORT)
PLAYERS	1-2
COMPLETE	



'Deluxe' is one of those naff English words that only foreigners who 'no speako da lingo' and burger chains bother to employ. With all due respect, the great games company Konami fall into former category rather than the latter, although they have made a few 'whoppers' in their time (Geddit!).

That's as may be, but now 'Deluxe' has found its way into the title of Konami's first Saturn title, Parodius Deluxe Pack, which debuts (not a moment too soon) in May. Although it appeared just too late to be fully reviewed in this issue, we thought we'd bring you an overview of the what's likely to be the best shoot 'em up for some months.

Parodius is a bit of an old tart in video-gaming terms. She's been around a while, and bestowed her charms on various machines. Konami originally produced arcade Parodius as a fun p'take of their side-scrolling Nemesis and Salamander shoot 'em ups. Although the game design was very similar, the serious spaceships were replaced by flying penguins, laser-spitting octopii and interstellar bees wearing boxing gloves.

Its success was such that a memorable SNES conversion followed (unarguably still one of the best shooters on the machine), and the Twinbee characters spawned their own series of arcade/console adventures. But that's another story. We join the tale as Konami revamp the game for the superconsoles — improved graphics, CD sound, more levels and a host of new player characters. And it's all quite exciting.

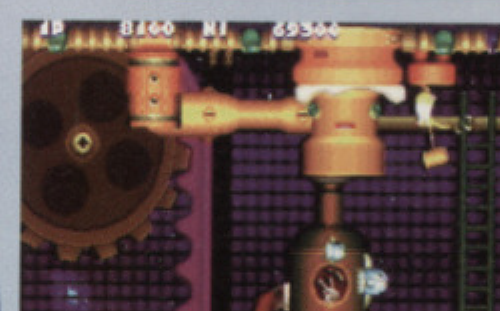




ICON AND ON AND ON...

Deluxe Pack offers a stunning choice of eight players. All of these are quite different, as they all have different power-up potentials. For every token you collect, a new power becomes available. The technique of combining powers together to create a devastating attack wave is the key to conquering Parodius.











ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

Parodius is a bit silly, a bit saucy and a bit naughty in equal measure. All the conventions of a blaster are in there, and the gameplay is taken ultra seriously, but otherwise, most of the enemies, especially the bosses, are plain dumb.

SILLY!

The first boss you encounter is a pirate cat with a ship's body. Or is it a pirate ship with a cat's head? Anyway, it meows. Exhibit B: the blow-fish boss, which employs some impressive sprite-scaling.







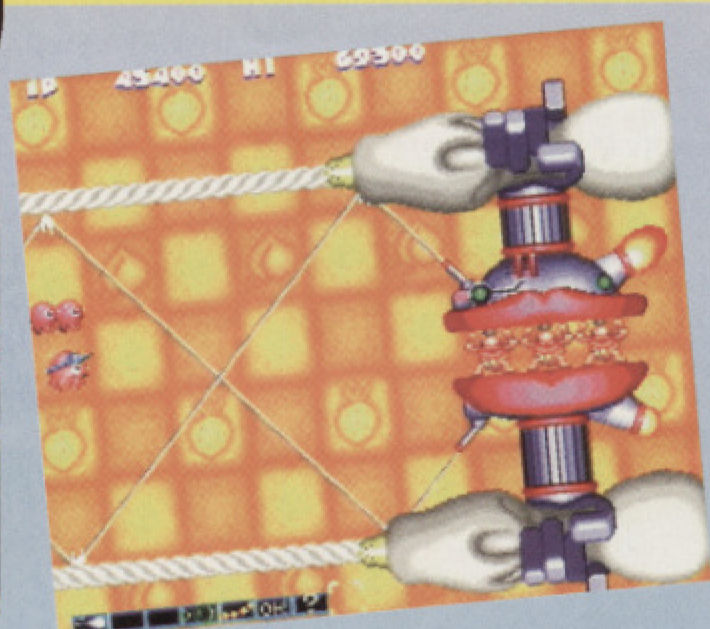
SAUCY!

Quite a few skimpy costumes and bras. On the carnival level, you meet a huge showgirl clambering about the screen awkwardly. The game invites you to make your way between her legs, carefully avoiding her death-dealing thighs.











NAUGHTY!

Confrontations with scantily-clad guardians who groan under the onslaught of your lasers. One is shielded only by a thin layer of terry towelling, which you are persuading her to drop. And you can play as a pig with an Elastoplast over its private parts.



PENTAROU TAKOSUKE VIC VIPER TWINBEE

EARTHWORM JIM



BY: VIRGIN

GAME TYPE: PLATFORM

RELEASE: JULY

PRICE: TBA

PLAYERS: 1

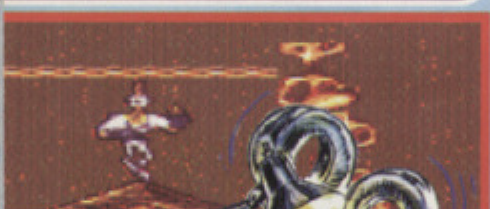
MEG: 4

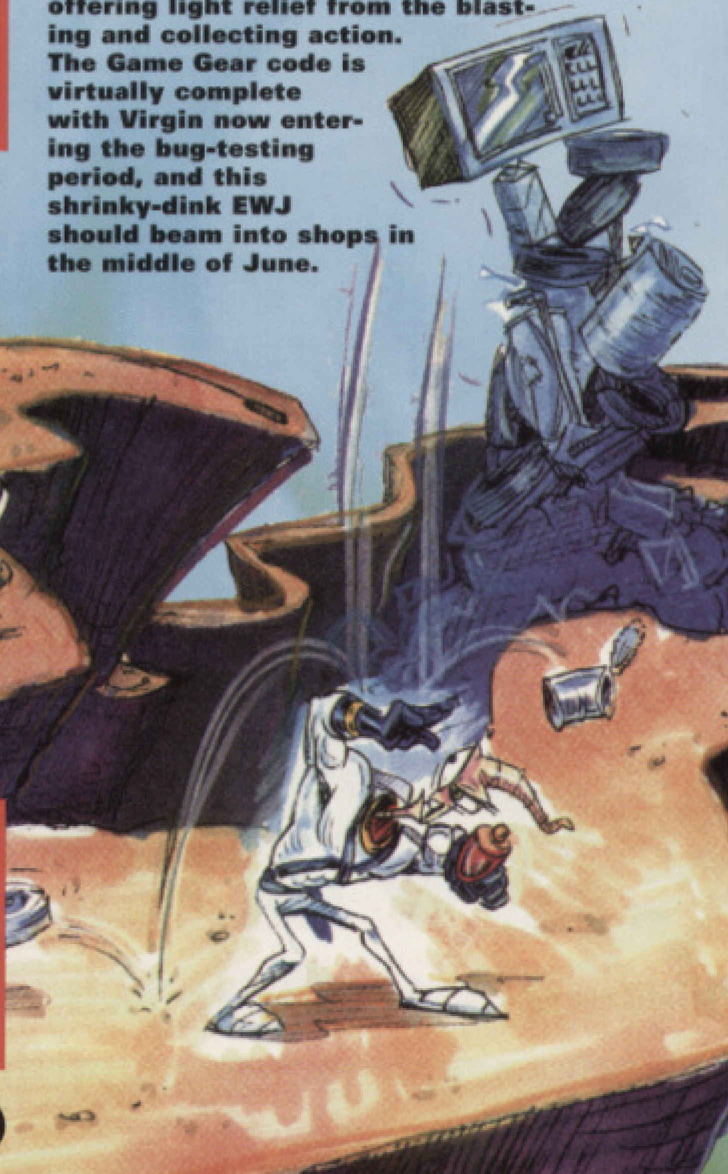
COMPLETE

They said it couldn't be done. "No,' they shrieked, "it's absolutely impossible." But Virgin didn't listen to such negative vibes (man), and are set to continue the recent trend of rather topper Game Gear games by porting Earthworm Jim over to the little battery gobbler.

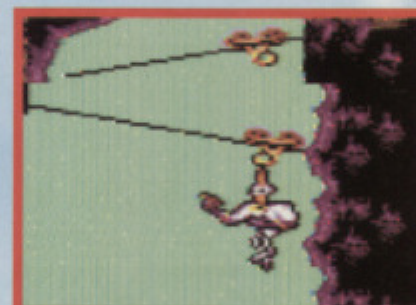
That rotten crop-worrier Psycrow's plans to retrieve his suit from the limbless hero has been reduced to fit into the relatively humble Game Gear, with converters, Eurocom, lifting the strongest elements of the 16bit game and compressing them into the Game Gear. As such, Jim's ongoing mission to rescue his good lady whilst retaining his new-found suit, now spans levels which, whilst lifting key scenes from the Megadrive game, offers new layouts to existing themes — with old faves like 'Launching The Cow' and Andy Asteroids offering light relief from the blasting and collecting action.

The Game Gear code is virtually complete with Virgin now entering the bug-testing period, and this shrinky-dink EWJ should beam into shops in the middle of June.









This geezer is...



...completely off his trolley...

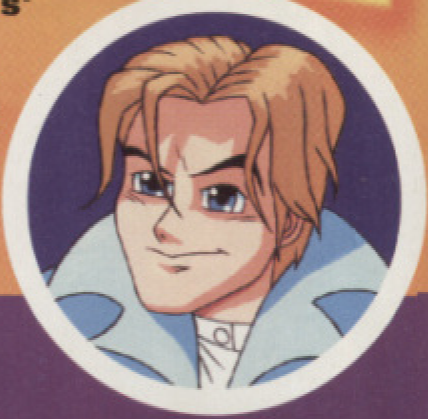




...in our humble estimation.

Greetings noble tipsters and welcome to a riproaringly packed edition of tips, cheats, hints, and Player's Guides to satisfy even the most ravenous gaming appetite. Take a peak at the outrageous Daytona cheats direct from Japan; drool over the selection of level codes and cheats from the most up-to-date games on the market; and fulfill your RPG fest Soleil hunger with the final part of Gus' pixel perfect Player's Guide.

To have your efforts included in the tips hall of fame, send them into GET 'EM WHILST THEY'RE HOT AND SPICY TIPS, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.





32X

MOTOCROSS Championship



Not a lot of people liked Motocross, but in the recent times of the great 32X software drought some souls sought solace in this pixel-spraying fest. Gary Weir from Larne, Co. Antrim has played the game to death and can reveal all for those needing codes to get past the trickier tracks.

LEVEL CODES

125CC AMATEUR

1. JCAAAAAAAA]A
2. aVwwhEKAgoA
3. htgRjGNA]JB
4. 4GRiEJVAwpB
5. CSpi[LZAMKC
6. AjJTGOdA0qC
7. fSSznQmAULD
8. uPykJTtA8rD
9. 8[kFLXyAkME
10. w16FsZzA]tE
11. WazmNc9AoNF
12. Eqt3ueDBMuF

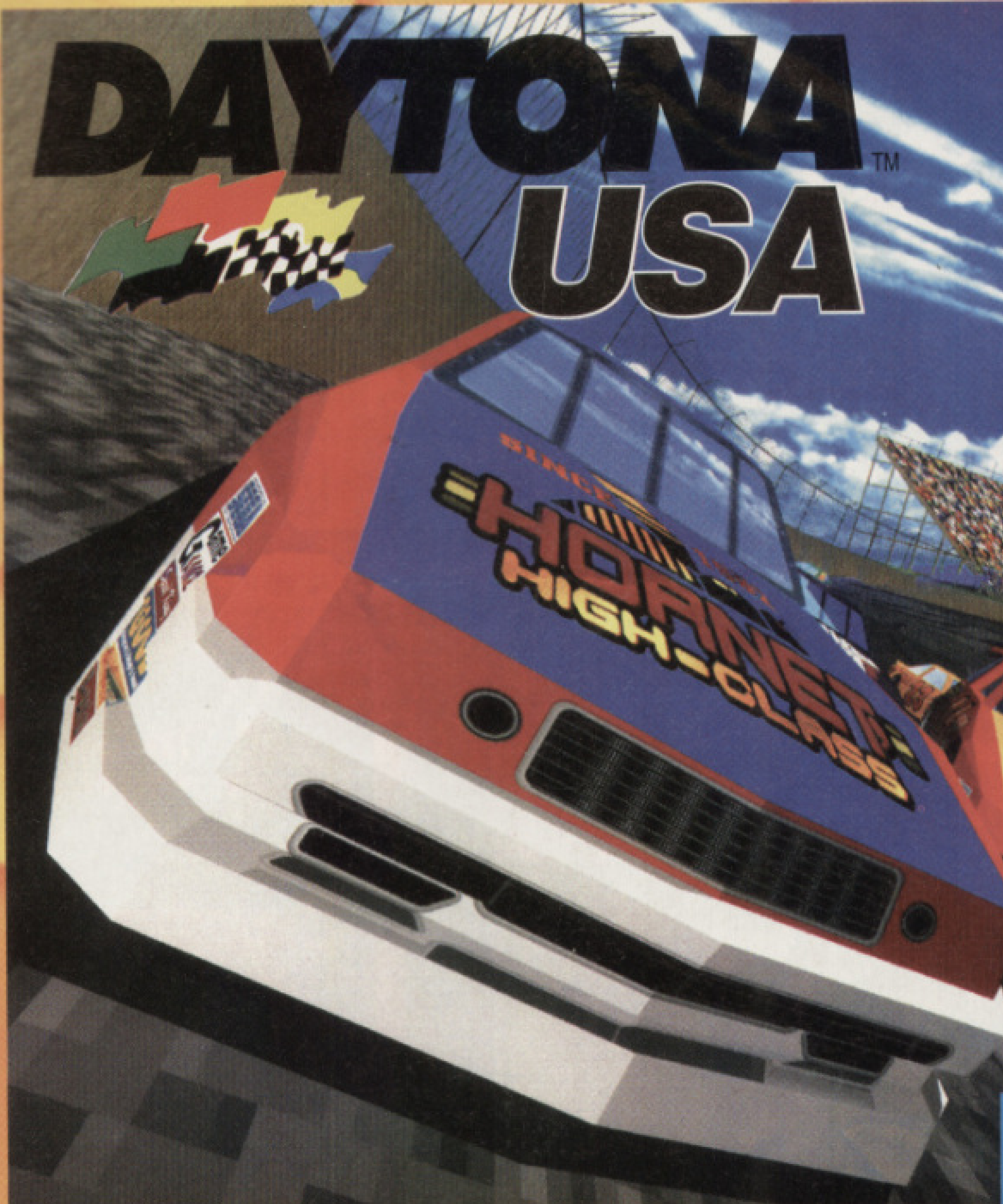
250CC EXPERT

1. EDAAAAAAAA]G
2. VWwwhEKAgoG
3. WuVBDHOA]JH
4. X#4xEKYAopH
5. hdBjGNdAQK]
6. g1x2NPgA0g]
7. QLa0]SmAcLJ
8. Yd60pUsAAsJ
9. KuiFrWuAoMK
10. #GLmsZ1AQtK
11. ?WrmNc5A0NL
12. JurnPgABUuL

500CC SUPERBIKE PRO

1. AGDAAAAAAAA]M
2. sWwwBEJAooM
3. 8mQxCGPAQJN
4. f7wBEkYA4pN
5. KLpifPeAKYO
6. ZnRzGS[A4qO
7. n3BkoVtAgLP
8. AEiUPZ1AEsP
9. CayOKe9AKMQ
10. jdg1LgGEBtQ
11. HDLmMjQBkNR
12. fOj2OoWBEuR

SATURN











PLAY AS UNA THE HORSE!! PLUS KARAOKE FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY!

Prepare to enter the strange world of Daytona USA... Bizarre as it sounds those ker-azy guys in AM2 have decided not to opt for the souped mega turboed wonder car, but instead to allow the victorious player the chance to race all of the courses as Una — one of the polygon horses from the Pegasus Pasture. Daytona disciples Stuart Day, Michael Naisibit, and Gareth Davis have uncovered this bizarre event and now can reveal how to access it just for you. Firstly you must come first on all of the courses on Normal Skill and Normal Enemy Level using any of the cars. Now you must come first on Advanced in the black Automatic car (Acceleration and Grip B). If you have been successful, you an additional selection will appear saying Daytona Una in Manual and Automatic. Hurrah!

KARAOKE CHALLENGE!

When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro — and this is certainly the case once more with those guys in AM2. Not satisfied with providing the most appalling singing known to gaming kind, they've only gone and included a karaoke version of the in-game music. Yep, that's right, David Leather from Leigh in Lancashire has written in with the incredible truth, and here's how you activate it... While picking the course and transmission on the Arcade tracks hold UP and when the game starts press the C button. Get singing!

32X



STAR WARS ARCADE



STOP THE TIMER





Top 32X Jedi battler Tim Foster from Abingdon, Oxford has been scouring the depths of the galaxy and has come up with a cheat to stop the timer on this super tough blaster. To stop that pesky timer simply start the game, and PAUSE the onslaught. Now on pad one press DOWN, B, UP, RIGHT, and LEFT. In the spirit of the Rebel Alliance a 'Yahoo!' will inform you of the successful completion of your mission. May the Force be with you!

MEGA-CD

EARTHWORM JIM SPECIAL EDITION



ALL LEVEL CODES

Hurrah! Long gone are the days of tapping in lists of codes, as instead those guys at Shiny have included a whole new password system for every level. And luckily they've sent me the complete solution just for you.

ASTEROIDS ONE — ORANGE ATOM GUN COW COW
HECK — ATOM FAUCET GUN COW ORANGE
BIG BRUTY — ATOM ORANGE ATOM COW FAUCET
ASTEROIDS TWO — FAUCET TV ATOM COW HYDRANT
DOWN THE TUBES — HYDRANT ATOM GUN HYDRANT JIM
ASTEROIDS THREE — ATOM ATOM COW ATOM COW
BUNGEE — ORANGE HYDRANT FAUCET GUN COW
ASTEROIDS FOUR — COW JIM TV TV ORANGE
LAB — COW COW FAUCET COW FAUCET
ASTEROIDS FIVE — HYDRANT HYDRANT ORANGE ATOM ORANGE
PETER PUPPY — FAUCET HYDRANT ATOM ORANGE ATOM
ASTEROIDS SIX — COW JIM COW HYDRANT FAUCET
INTESTINES — GUN ORANGE HYDRANT COW TV
ASTEROIDS SEVEN — GUN ORANGE FAUCET GUN TV
BUTTVILLE — ORANGE COW ATOM ATOM COW

MEGAD



PROBOTECTOR



AN APOLOGY!

Last month I printed two totally excellent Probotector cheats in these hallowed pages. The cheats were tested on an American cart — on which they worked — but for one reason or another Konami decided to remove the cheats from the European versions. Don't ask us why, all we know is that there are absolutely no cheats for this version. Sorry!



Lemmings 2 The Tribes



LEVEL CODES

Oz is the founder of many a worthy cause, but banning the rest of the team from nuking the Lemmings is taking it a bit far. The next cheat, therefore, has the Oz seal of approval as it guarantees the unnecessary slaughter of the small furry things. Cheers a bunch Kate Vanbeek from London!

CLASSIC — IPNNAPJHMLOFPEHHLLBOCP
BEACH — PDBGBLJFMOGJLFFLONBHJL
CAVE — OHLPOHPHPNPPAAEAEADACA
CIRCUS — MLJNNCGLLGNLCODHKLNNPC
EGYPTIAN — HBNPPBPJHNPOJPNPPHPPAA
HIGHLAND — NGHDLKNNCPLHOLPNADIDMB
MEDIAEVAL — PFKANAKIHEEKCNJKEPKINE
OUTDOOR — DICCFBMIHEECCFJEELCGFD
POLAR — EPDPLPOPPPAAACACIAIAGA
SHADOW — FNIJNEHCDNKAFBCJNEIKFF
SPACE — KEDMCGBHINMHGEHCFJLMGG
SPORTS — LOPGHPMBOBHBPIJMFODHJP

RIVE

STORY OF THOR

BEST PLAYERS AND SOUND TEST

Story of Thor really had those review jaws dropping a couple of months ago so expect a Player's Guide in the not too distant future. But in the meantime, young Vince Lambert from Spalding comes forth with some novelties to keep you going. To access the best characters go to the Title Screen (the one with 'Press Start'), hold B, and press Start for the best five players. Alternatively go to the Diary Screen, pick an empty page, and press B and START to amuse yourself with a Sound Test.

REN AND STIMPY'S INVENTION

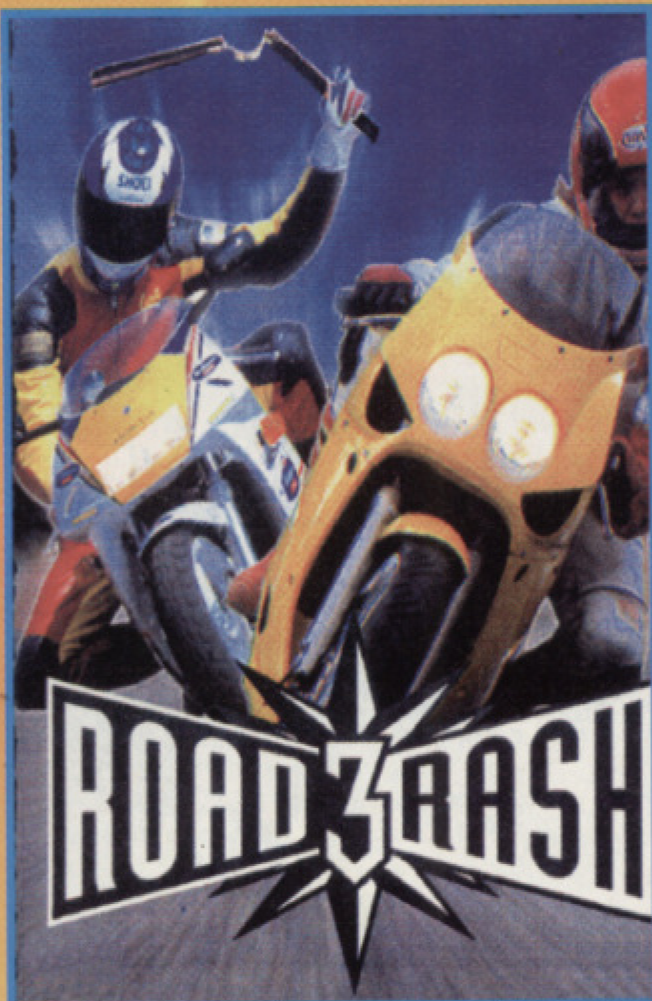
MEGADRIVE

LEVEL CODES

Heeey Steeempy wee've got some teeps for our decidedly uninventive game to help out all those poor people who invested their hard-earned cash in this rubbeesh! Say a big thanks to Paul Rogers.

NEIGHBOURHOOD — 8b20000b - 000fWU
THE ZOO — 8500003 - VS0J4WW
THE CITY — 8310009 - NX064WC
THE POUND — 692000G - V2042W9







LEVEL CODES

Head out on the Road Rash highways and byways with these level codes supplied by Aoili Muguro of London.

LEVEL 1
BK21 2005 — $4120 (EXCLUDING BIKE TRADE)

LEVEL 2
E801 2701 — WITH NEW RAT BIKE
N020 2611 — RAT BIKE, PERFORMANCE UPGRADE, AND $2670 EXCLUDING TRADE-IN
3U41 A6TC — RAT BIKE, PERFORMANCE, AND TYRE UPGRADES, AND $7530 EXCLUDING TRADE-IN

LEVEL 3
IS00 3DOV — NEW PERRO BIKE AND $2330 EXCLUDING TRADE-IN
BVA1 RDPS — PERRO BIKE AND $15250 EXCLUDING TRADE-IN
6K60 3NT8 — NEW MEDIUM NITRO BIKE AND $19310 EXCLUDING TRADE-IN
7M01 RNTE — NEW MEDIUM NITRO BIKE, ALL UPGRADES, AND $1790 EXCLUDING TRADE-IN
T3U1 RCTS — PERRO BIKE AND $43290 INCLUDING TRADE-IN
TV83 RDTJ — PERRO BIKE AND $55330 INCLUDING TRADE-IN
DH00 RTTC — DIABLO 1000 NITRO, ALL UPGRADES, AND $21340 INCLUDING TRADE-IN

LEVEL 4
7841 SM07 — OK NITRO BIKE, PERFORMANCE UPGRADE, AND $8790 EXCLUDING TRADE-IN
D340 SS0D — DIABLO 1000 NITRO, ALL UPGRADES, AND $5340 EXCLUDING TRADE-IN.



JELLY BOY

CHEAT CODES

He's fat, he's round, he bounces on the ground — Jelly Boy, Jelly Boy! If you read last month's review you'll know we thought Jelly Boy we something pretty special. So in the time honoured tradition we have the codes to give you a helping hand through some of the tougher stages.

10 LIVES — WHCTLH WMFPCD RWTNWW TTCTLW
20 LIVES — STSHTY NRTCLW FHSMGS SHLWTN
ONE NOTE EVERY MAP — YRRTLM WFCMGW HBVCBW HLGHWD
ALL LOCKS OPEN — MTBCNM MTGWTT PMYWTC TSMFTM
CHEAT — HHMHCP SHTWHW MFMTHT SCHMLM

LOSER OF THE MONTH

SHOCK HORROR! SADDO SENDS IN DAYTONA VIRTUA RACING DELUXE CHEAT!

For all of you crazy heads who read our stupendously good sister publication, Sega Magazine, you may remember the 'exclusive' cheat they published in April's edition to control one of the cars from Daytona USA in Virtua Racing Deluxe. For the benefit of our un-Sega Mag believers the cheat claimed you could start a one-player game with the stock car and spell out the letters D, A, Y, T, O, N, and A on a piece of tarmac to the left of the bridge. Once you'd completed this successfully, the familiar 'Gentlemen start your engines!' sounds and you can play the first track. Quite clearly this was a pretty elaborate April Fool, and anybody who fell for it would have to be extremely sad. But to take the biscuit Kabir Hussain from Aston, Birmingham sent in the cheat to my tips desk! Not only is it uncool to rip off cheats from other mags, but to insist he'd seen it and to check you can ring AM2 is

Soleil
SOLUTION PART 2

Last month, we left the saga of Soleil at a crucial point. Our hero is only about to ascend to Heaven! Don't think you'll be climaxing too soon, though, as it's back down to earth quite soon. Lie back, grab a joypad and think of England (or any specific part of the UK you might live in).

SAINT HEAVEN

1. The first chamber of Saint Heaven is of no consequence. Follow the map over the page to reach the next area of Saint Heaven. In the following



series of rooms, you must make leaps of faith onto invisible platforms. The final room is sealed by a door that only one of your animals can breach. Trace the outlines of the previous invisible platforms to aid your choice.

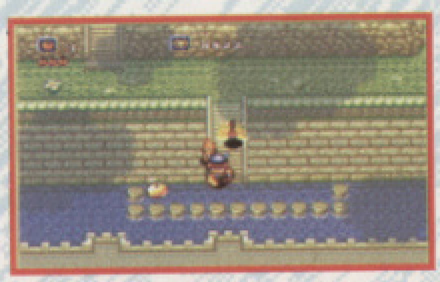
2. The holy shrine consists of a central island with an



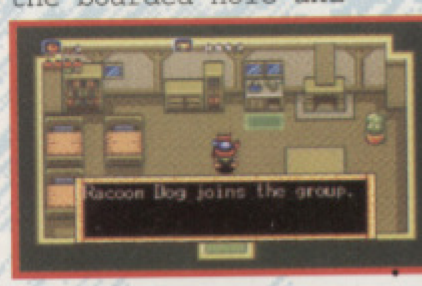
octagonal path ringing it. Jump on the four corner tiles to unleash the dragon. His vulnerable area is the head. Best tactics are to lure the Dragon to bottom of the screen, then fire swords into it from above. Once defeated, he returns you to the base of Babel. You have regained the power of human speech. Talk to the guard and watch the butterfly emerge. Direct the sword into the niche to operate the switch.

A LINK TO THE PAST

3. Some mopping up. Return to Soleil town (cross the lake between Camellia and Rafflesia for speed). Go to the king and present the medals for the glory sword. The cow



tells you about a funny flower in the church garden. Stomp on the one rotating in the opposite direction to open a stairway in the town moat – for a glowing apple. Next go to Dahlia. Using the butterfly you can reach the boarded hole and



travel down to the bottom cash bag. The same technique works at the top of Anemone beach to reach a tricky glowing apple.

4. Return to Soleil town and visit the 'House for Sale'. Your mother will tap you for 10 malins. Now go

ANIMAL FARM

Now is a good time to profile all the animals you may find at your disposal, and where to find them:



ARMADILLO
FOUND: *Beaver pool, Iris.*
USE: *Used as a platform or switch.*
NOTES: *None*



SQUIRREL
FOUND: *Shuffler's lair, Burn Daisy*
USE: *Lets your sword bounce off walls. Useful for attacking round corners.*
NOTES: *None.*



LION
FOUND: *Freesia*
USE: *Makes your sword fiery. Use against any frozen foe. Best weapon against bosses.*



CAT
FOUND: *All shops.*
USE: *Functions as an extra life. Is used automatically when you die.*
NOTES: *Cats return to shop after use. May be rebought for 50 malins.*



PENGUIN
FOUND: *Octopus Lair*
USE: *Makes your sword icy. Use against any hot foe. Several bosses respond to Penguy.*
NOTES: *His family are hiding out in Freesia.*



CHEETAH
FOUND: *Racetrack, Iris.*
USE: *Increases speed, and consequently jumping distance.*
NOTES: *Essential to collect before the third training course is passed.*



DINOSAUR
FOUND: *Oasis, Camellia Desert*
USE: *Allows you to cross water, protects you from various floor surfaces.*
NOTES: *With dino, you can skip across the big lake.*

to your old house to find, much to your surprise, mother again. After talking return to the new house, carrying the dog as one of your animals. He



will spot the second mother is an imposter, who reveals herself to be a doppleganging racoon who joins your team to become one of its most useful members.

5. Go to Iris and talk several times to each of the townsfolk. You'll hear the story of Dorothy, the red shoes and the cyclone (lawsuits at the ready,



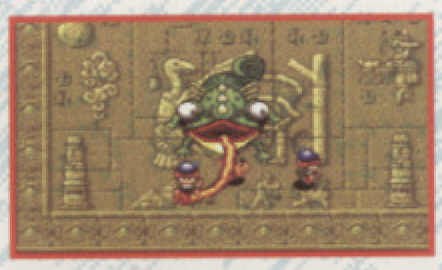
MGM?). With this new knowledge go to the large hole at the North and, following the plant's instructions, peer over the edge. Said cyclone comes to whisk you back a few years.

6. The magic shoes are hidden in the chest in the town, but still unattainable. Go East to the animal village (where the beavers live). In their place is an armadillo. Use the plank to stand beside him and talk. He joins your group, allowing himself to be used as a plank. With him as a stepping stone you can reach the magic shoes, and automatically return to the present.

DESERT ADVENTURE



7. Go to the townsfolk and they will say something about Camellia Desert. Head to the deserted settlement in the desert, and you will now find access to the temple area. Talk to the people in the assembly room and they instruct you about the Awakening powder. Ascend the tower until you come to young captive. They will tell you



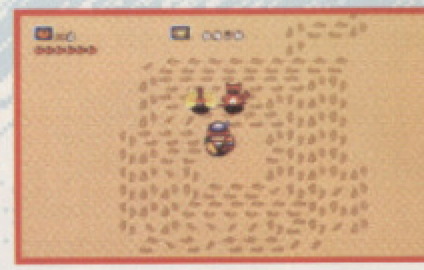
to look out for the hidden gaps in the wall, revealed by a lighter shade on each side (ghosts also pass through). You will need to use the armadillo as a platform to cross the larger gaps. At the top of



the tower follow the punter down the rope to retrieve the Awakening Powder. Now the chamber to the left is open...

8. Face the Chameleon. The wicked boss has a series of attack patterns, followed by a rush by his minions. Use the raccoon decoy to fool the minions, although it will not confuse him. After defeating the Chameleon, the Moa bird joins your party, with the ability to strengthen the powers of all other animals.

9. As you try to leave the Palace, you will be intercepted and captured. The girl you share a cell with dies, and the only exit is located at the top of the room, revealed by a patch of light before it. Leave the palace and talk to the young man with the glistening smile. Now you are back at the Oasis. Leave for Burn Daisy, and retrace your steps to the bird shaped platform admidst the lava. The frazzled offering you saw



earlier is now one of the last surviving Dodos. His remarkable power comes in useful if you go back into the walled chamber with the two strange objects out of reach. By grabbing the puppet across, you go to battle with the Puppet Master. Enlist the help of the lion. Your fiery sword will destory the puppet, if you can aim it at the crotch! Then the Puppet Master is vulnerable as he sets about retrieving the pieces. Catch him with a charged fire sword to do extra damage. Once finished, you are outside of Burn Daisy again.

LEARNING





BUTTERFLY
FOUND:Tower of Babel
USE:Allows you to direct the flying sword using the joypad.
NOTES:Butterfly is the 'useless' caterpillar transformed.



BAT
FOUND:Shops
USE:When selected, shields you for a short time.
NOTES:Not necessary to have. Save your money.



EGG
FOUND:Shops
USE:When selected, has a smart bomb effect.
NOTES:Not necessary. Save your money.



LEVIATHAN
FOUND:Sunken temple
USE:Increases sword speed.
NOTES:Some bosses require Leviathan sword attacks.



DOG
FOUND: Village, dog house.
USE:Dog is positioned to grab foes and hold them. Useless against bosses.
NOTES:Has other uses — in town and Saint Heaven.



RACOON
FOUND:House, Soleil Town
USE:Acts as a decoy, attracting enemies.
NOTES:Incrediby useful in many situations. Experiment.



MOA BIRD
FOUND:Palace, Camellia Desert
USE:Increases effects of other animals: lion, cheetah, penguin.
NOTES:Exceptionally useful. Combine with cheetah for super speed.



DODO
FOUND:Burn Daisy
USE:Items or baddies stick to the sword with Dodo.
NOTES:Use to grab out of reach apples. Required on some bosses.

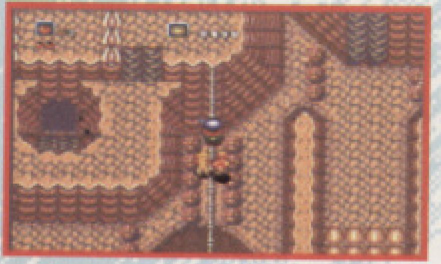
again.

12. Visit the hut on the right and talk to all of the monkey's pals. That will revive him, he expresses his gratitude and you return to the present. Leave the town. On your right



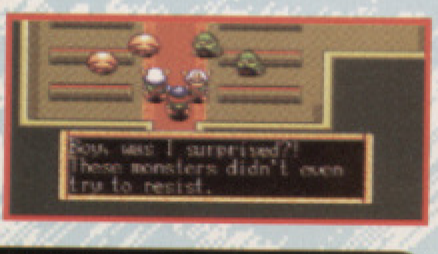
is the persistent apple on the pedestal that has evaded your attempts so far. Stand at the fence to its right. Use the butterfly to hit the red switch, then combine butterfly and Dodo to retrieve the apple.

13. Enter Dahlia valley from the bottom. Use the fenced off waterfall, as you did to retrieve the cash bag. You can enter the mountain at the bottom. The next section is a straightfor-



ward maze, though you will need to use the combined powers of the cheetah and Moa bird to jump along the mud flows. Finally you reach a chamber with the mother monster — a huge heart susceptible only to the combined forces of fire and ice in your sword.

14. Your next stop is Soleil Town. The townsfolk are in the church, but the monsters have escaped from the dungeon. Go upstairs to the King's room, then follow them to the church. Talk to them, leave the church, then follow the King's men back inside. Return to the castle and speak to the King. Finally, leave the castle and examine the sign at the fountain site. It proclaims a statue to be built in your honour — but you now think differently because of the monsters' feelings. You return to the present.



SETTING TO RIGHTS

15. Go to the point on the left of the lake. You are in a new dungeon. Move the green block to gouge a channel to the edge of the black area. Jump on the switch to release the water and flood the black area. You will need the services of the dinosaur to cross this area. The next dungeon will test most of the animal skills you have acquired in your journey, namely:



A) Using the butterfly power to reach this distant switch.



B) Cheetah's power to jump this chasm.



C) Armadillo to knock switches.



D) Cheetah's power to cross pink sludge.

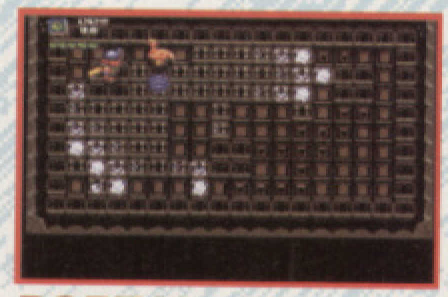


E) Butterfly power to reveal hidden path with sword.

The party of monsters who you then meet inform you of the Energy Spirit, who is holed up ahead, beyond five chambers of the senses. These are entered through a series of portals.



SAINT HEAVEN
Map to paragraph 1, overleaf.

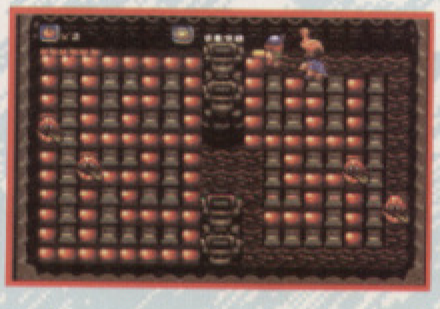


PORTAL

1) In this room, prime a set of tiles by running across them. Use the racoon decoy to position the boss. Then by running over another tile, you set off a spike trap. The tiles reset and must be primed again for another attack.

PORTAL

2) A simple Pac-man style game. Simply gobble the hearts to destroy the monsters.



PORTAL

3) You face a deadly groping session on a slippery floor. Again, the fire sword proves the most effective way to

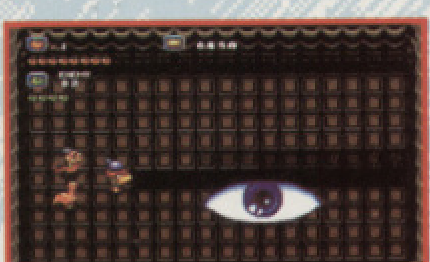


destroy the monster, and the touch of the hands themselves in not fatal. Avoid being pushed by jumping against their attacks.

PORTAL

4) The protagonist eye hides behind a tiled floor, making surprise attacks. Use your sword





to temporarily shift the tiles, allowing to keep track of the eye's movements. When above the tiles it is vulnerable.

PORTAL

5) The musical note strikes the floor, creating a motion to sweep you into the surrounding spikes. Use the combination of



lion and Moa bird to power your sword, and quickly change to dinosaur every time the floor begins to change.



FINAL PORTAL

The energy spirit is pretty easy to defeat. It releases energy spheres that both attack you and remove the floor tiles. First choose the dodo, as that draws the spirit's vulnerable eye to the surface. Switch to the fire sword to do damage. Return to the dodo each time the eye disappears. With the spirit defeated, the portal to the monsters' own world is opened, and they are sucked through.

EPILOGUE

You return to Soleil Town. A new harmony replaces the old aggressions — a goddess of Peace replaces the statue of a warrior. One task remains before you can leave the town and end the game. You must find Johnny, your missing dog. You'll find him in the King's chamber, chatting to the puppy. When you leave the town, all your animal band join you for a walk. It's a subdued, but satisfying end to a rather great game.







SNATC



Strange rumblings have been afoot in tipster HQ. Under the cover of night large boxes of equipment have been building up in Paul's tiny corner of the office and he's been ranting about some secret mission in Uxbridge. So best pass you over to him for the complete guide to all the bestest and most secretest bits in Konami's top graphical RPG, Snatcher...

Right, listen up! I've snuck into Konami headquarters and found the most files containing all of these exciting events. Not only have I uncovered all of the secret events in the game, but also discovered all of the phone numbers for all of the locations. So even if you have completed the game, it's time to revisit the realm of the Snatchers.

MIKA — SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The first time you're in the HQ, after hearing about Junkers from the Chief, go somewhere else with



Mika and do LOOK; MIKA'S FACE six times. Then go to the Chief's office again.

OVEREATING AND OVERDRINKING WARNING

In Outer Heaven do ORDER; BUFFALO CUISINE three times, and ORDER; DRINK 3 times. Then go to the Chief's office sometime later. In the original PC-Engine game the meat was whale, not buffalo!

PICK-UP GIRLS

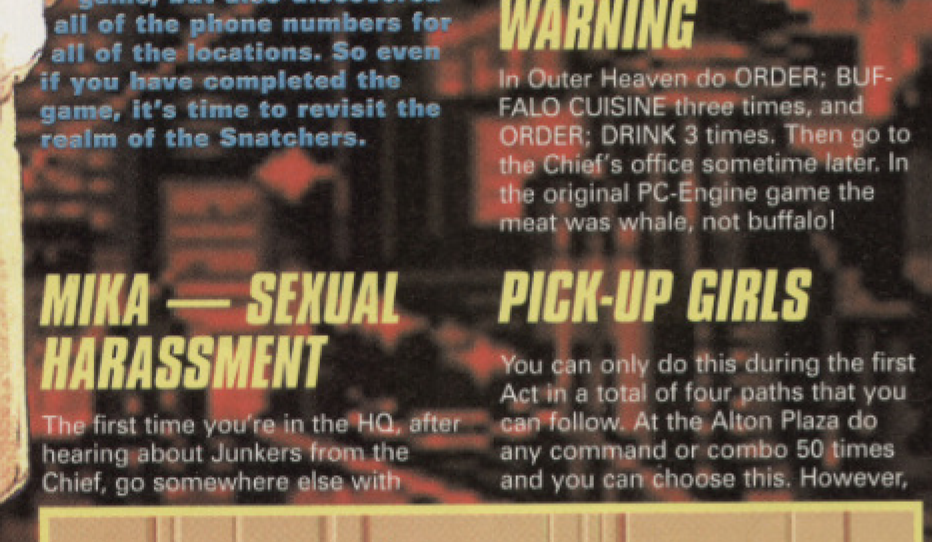
You can only do this during the first Act in a total of four paths that you can follow. At the Alton Plaza do any command or combo 50 times and you can choose this. However, if you have done the fortune-teller, do INVESTIGATE; NEARBY PEOPLE first.

WITNESS MARRIAGE INFIDELITY?

In the Alton Plaza do LOOK; AREA five times. But to make this work you must have called Jamie at least once, and be able to go to Outer Heaven.

FORTUNE TELLER APPEARANCE

Do the following commands at least six times —
INVESTIGATE; NEARBY PEOPLE
LOOK; FORTUNE TELLER
INVESTIGATE; FORTUNE TELLER
And you will get your fortune told.



SECOND FORTUNE TELLER APPEARANCE

While looking for Katrina in the Alton Plaza, do the following commands eight times. But you must have already met the Fortune Teller in the first Act.
SEARCH KATRINA
Followed by GET FORTUNE TOLD





LEAM LOVE LINE NUMBER

Once more in the Alton Plaza repeat LOOK, NEARBY PEOPLE until the number pops up randomly.

STREET PERFORMER

Repeat LOOK; NEARBY PEOPLE until he appears in the Alton Plaza.

TISSUE

When you don't know the love line number perform the following four times — INVESTIGATE; DOWN-TOWN; INVESTIGATE...

RAMEN SHOP

For the last time in Alton Plaza, and when you don't have an appointment with Napoleon, do LOOK; AREA.

NEO KOBE PIZZA

Feeling peckish in Plato's Cavern? Then why not grab a slice of Neo Kobe pizza. Do INVESTIGATE; AREA twice, followed by INVESTIGATE; FOOD STAND twice, and finally SMELL.

FREEMAN FAMILY COUNSELLING

In front of Ivan's house ASK; About Background. Then have a natter on the 'dog n' bone' by selecting USE METAL GEAR; VIDEOPHONE; CALL; 302501. From this point go somewhere other than Ivan's flat and come back. Once you've returned ASK; About Background.

VCR MESSAGE

Once more in Plato's Cavern do LOOK; INSIDE STORE five times. Apparently in the original PC-Engine version, Metal Gear loaded a blue flick into his system and went into a robotic frenzy! This was all removed for the Western version.

WEATHER FORECAST PHONE LIST

While looking for Katrina do the same steps as before when seeking the Fortune Teller the second time. Prior to meeting the Fortune Teller, Metal Gear will give you the info.

JAMIE'S AFFAIR MESSAGE

At the end of Act Three do LOOK; JAMIE, but only if you've already performed the following:
1. Witnessed Jamie with the Chief.
2. After that called Jamie and chosen TALK; JAMIE IN ALTON PLAZA.
3. In Act Two asked the Chief ASK; JAMIE IN ALTON PLAZA.



PHONE LIST

LOCATION	PHONE NUMBER
KONAMI R&D	07880000573
WEATHER FORECAST	177
FIRE DEPARTMENT	119
SNATCHER 911	256128
NAPOLEON	395644
JAMIE SEED	393444
ISABELLA VELVET	396004
KONAMI HQ	345678
SON OF FREEMAN	302501
NUMBER ON TISSUE	390910
MR KUSHIBUCHI	333333
JEREMY BLAUSTEIN'S FLAT	416766
MR INAMURA	443723
MR TOGO	446454
LOVE LINE	556666
PLATO'S CAVERN	691170
MR SASAKI	796641
MR NAKAMURA	846736
POLICE	911
JAMIE'S WORKPLACE	391009





BY	ACCLAIM
RELEASE	JUNE
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM
PLAYERS	1
MEG	16

BREAK DOWN



ORIGINALITY



CHALLENGE



ACTION



STRATEGY



REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
PASSWORD

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
COOL

ORIGIN

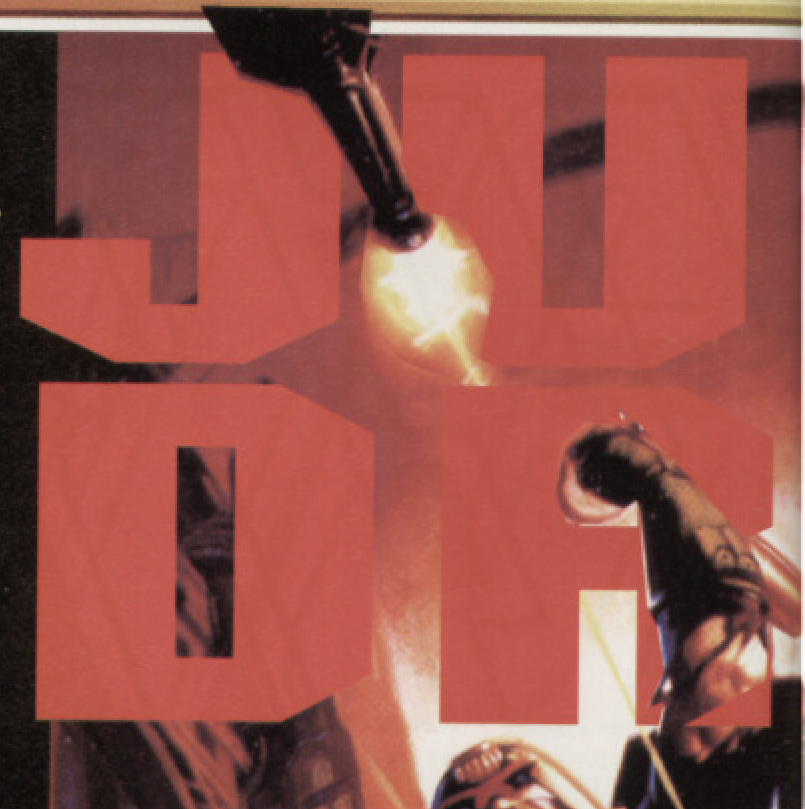
A platformer based on events of both the Judge Dredd film and comics.

GAME AIM

Complete two mission objectives and pick off the odd boss.

BEAT THIS

GET TO THE FLYING SECTION



The year is 2060 and the United States of America is virtually unrecognisable from as it is today. A nuclear war has seen to that. Where New York once stood, a huge Mega-City now reigns supreme, with similar cities dominating the UK, Japanese and Russian skylines. Of all these Mega-City's, the US Mega-City One is the largest, containing 600,000,000 citizens within self-contained 'Blocks' housing up to 60,000 people in each.

With such huge numbers crammed into these buildings, and unemployment running at 75% thanks to almost complete automation, time weighs heavy in Mega-City One, and the result is a never-ending spate of crimes and misdemeanours. Everything is punishable in Mega-City One: mugging, stealing, littering — even incitement to mug by wearing flash gear — and overseeing that justice is done are the all-powerful Judges. Overseen by the 'Five Who Rule', the Judges are empowered to administer sentences and judgement of anyone caught committing crimes. And of all the legendary Judges that Mega-City One has thrown up, one is recorded as being the ultimate lawman: genetically-engineered to be the perfect Judge. He answers to the name of Joe Dredd. This is his story...

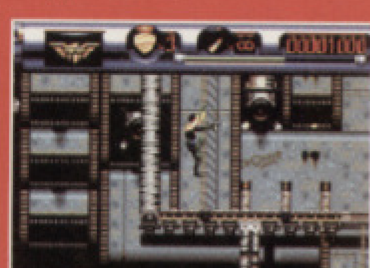


BRIGHT LIGHTS, MEGA-CITY

Mega-City One is a two-tiered place, with the impressive towerblocks overshadowing the grimy underneath populated by a wealth of mutants and criminals. Needless to say, as Dredd these are the areas the player sees the most of, with Dredd pounding the streets in search of his mission objectives and perps. In true Judith Chalmers' style, here's a guide to the thirteen places to see...

NAME:HEAVENLY HEAVEN

INFO:A warm-up beat through one of the city's roughest blocks.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Destroy weapon crates.



NAME:THE CURSED EARTH

INFO:Mutie country — where the wild run free...
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Find the 'Book Of Law.'



NAME:ASPEN PENAL COLONY

INFO:The prison has been overthrown by a group of unruly inmates.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Close all security doors.

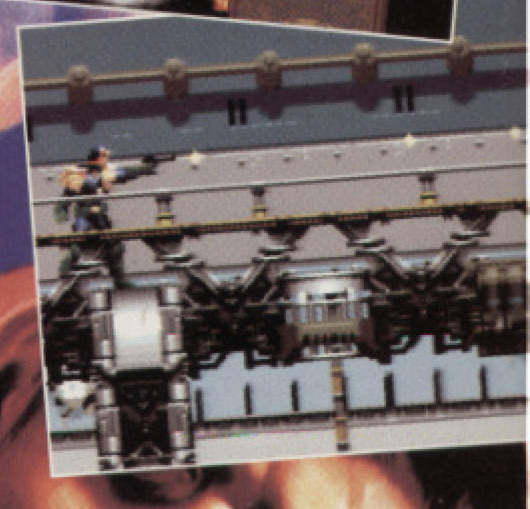


NAME:SEWER SYSTEM

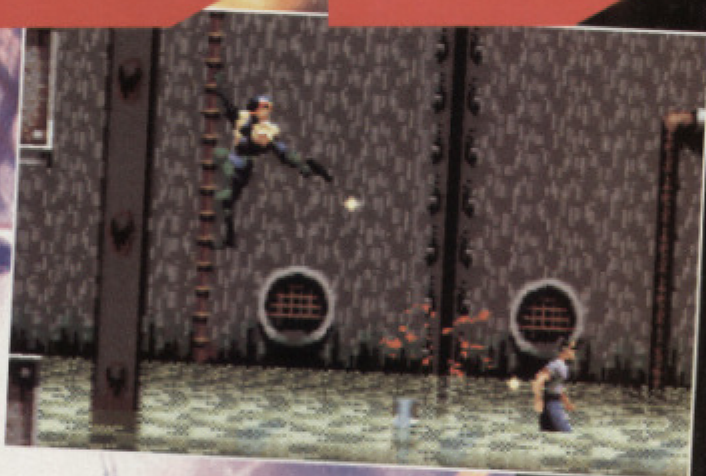
INFO:Having been made a scapegoat for Fargo's death, Dredd seeks sanctuary.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Find ammo for your return.













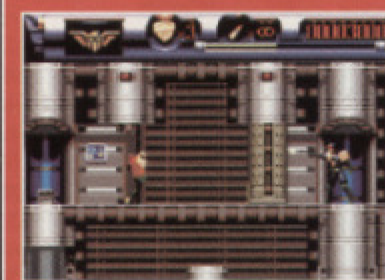
COMMENT

PAUL

The arrival of Dredd has caused quite a stir in both the movie and software industry, and so it's hardly surprising the hype and anticipation have reached fever-pitch. But as the game stands, it's not quite the top title I was hoping for. Visually, I was impressed by the heavy emphasis on scenes and characters from the comics mixed with the cinematic plot, but the repetitiveness of the enemy sprites throughout level after level, is demonstrative of a consistent lack of variation. What's more, the mission objectives also tend to be along the same lines — activating terminals, opening doors. Once you've got past the first couple of levels, this endless repetition doesn't inspire you to battle on. Unfortunately, Dredd is nothing more than a decidedly average platformer, that manages to keep its head above water on the strength of the movie tie-in and the nice design touches. The next generation of systems looms, and Dredd looks dated already. Lots of potential, marred by the shackles of a platformer.

BRIGHT LIGHTS, MEGA-CITY (cont)

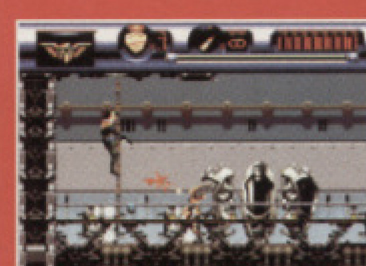
NAME:HALL OF JUSTICE
INFO:Having found the book, it's time to clear your name.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Reach Council Chamber.



NAME:STATUE OF LIBERTY
INFO:Equipped with the latest Protection Suit, it's time to find Rico.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Destroy Rico's ABC Robots.



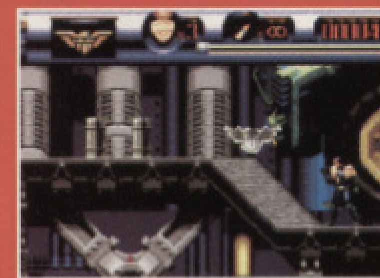
NAME:JANUS LAB
INFO:Rico is in the process of cloning himself — and acts as the level's boss.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Deactivate Rico's computer terminals.



NAME:BENEATH JANUS
INFO:An alien terrorist group have invaded Mega-City One using the sewers to enter.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Eradicate Gila Munja terrorists.



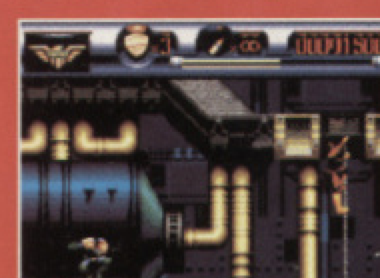
NAME:RC4 PROCESSING PLANT
INFO:The convicts there are threatening to pollute Mega-City One with toxic waste.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Destroy RC4 canisters to prevent pollution.



NAME:CITY TOWERS
INFO:Riots have been reported from this towering building. Find out why.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Wipe out Sky Surfers.



NAME:JUSTICE ONE SATELLITE
INFO:This moon base has been invaded by the Dark Judges who are searching for a warp path to Earth. Find it first.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Activate security and locate warp unit to prevent Death coming to Earth.



NAME:DEAD WORLD
INFO:The warp device you found was a fake. Follow Death, Mortis, Fear and Fire to Dead World and destroy their warp unit.
MAIN OBJECTIVE:Save Earth from Dark Judges.



There's one more level to find following the destruction of the Dark Judges, but if we were to tell you what it was we'd be banged up in the Iso-Cubes for twenty years. Still, a forthcoming tips guide will reveal all so stay tuned.



FOOLSSSS! YOU CANNOT KILL WHAT DOESSSSS NOT LIVE...

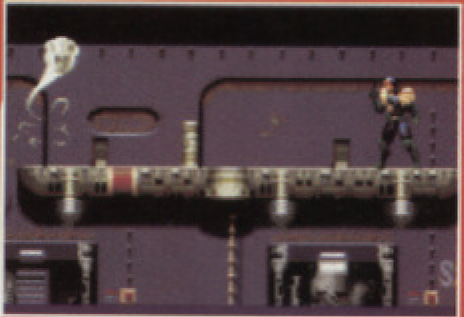
Each of the thirteen stages is split into three sub-levels. The basic objectives remain the same throughout the first two, but the third world plays host to a larger 'Boss' perp of some description. Initially, things start off nice and easy with a shield-swinging crime lord, but the path to Rico's Janus project sees Dredd battling ABC Robots who are impervious to normal bullets, and require three direct hits from Hi-Ex bullets whilst they are facing Dredd, before facing Rico who jets around the screen in a pair of anti-grav boots. And this is just a warm-up until you get to the Dark Judges later in the game...



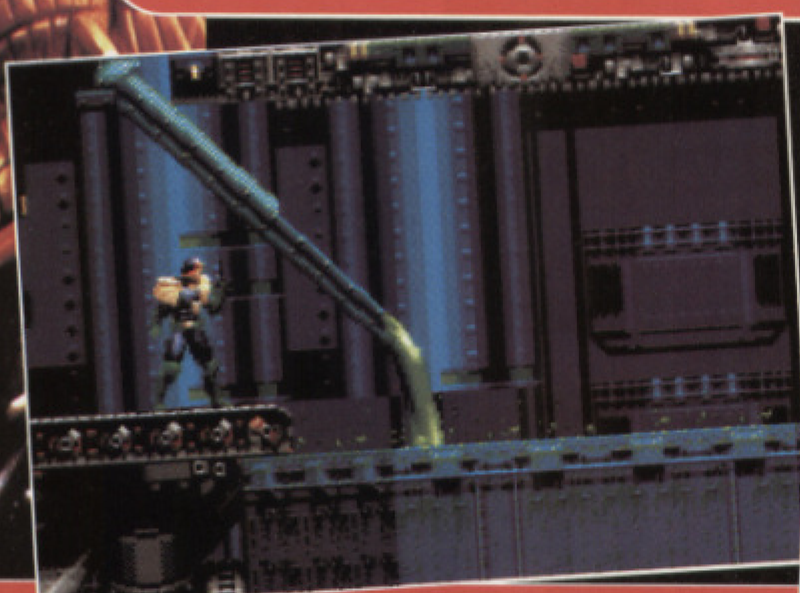


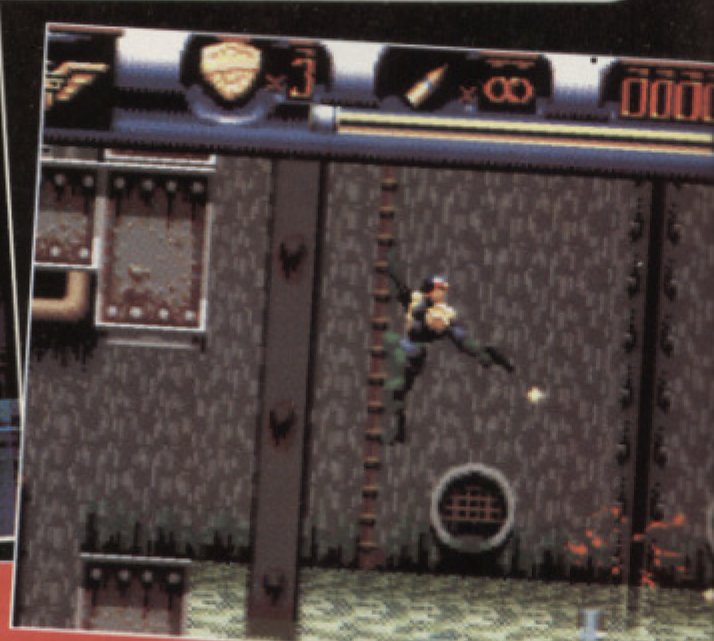


Their eyes locked as the unlikely pair danced...



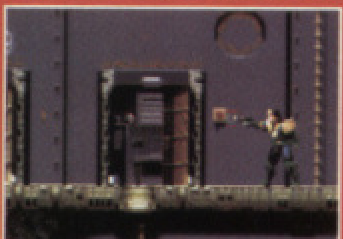
Sssssod off, sssssslapheeeead!



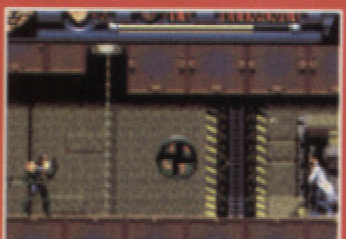


DROKK! RICOCHET BULLETS!

Dredd's Lawgiver is equipped with the capacity to take different kinds of bullets. Initially, Dredd is armed with an infinite supply of ordinary bullets, but killing perps and blowing open crates reveals icons which are automatically added to JD's inventory. The following all have specific uses, and are switched between using the C button.



BULLET: Used against ordinary perps.



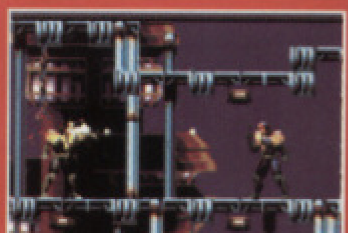
RICOCHET: Useful in contained areas — Aspen, for example.



GRENADE: Opens crates and essential for the Halls Of Justice's guard droids.



HI-EX: The only weapon really effective against ABC Robots.



ARMOUR PIERCING: Use against corpses containing Dark Judges.

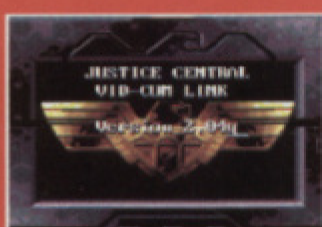
VDU KILLED THE RADIO STAR

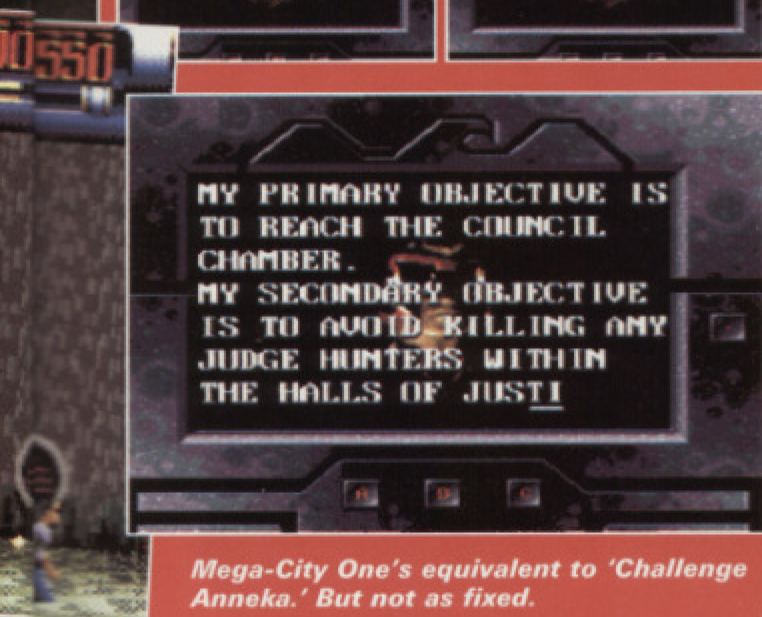
Inventories of Dredd's health, ammunition stocks and mission details are accessed using a number of Justice Law Terminals which are scattered throughout a number of the levels. Logging on simply involves facing Dredd towards the terminal, and the screen will black out to unveil the said three options. In later levels, these terminals perform a dual purpose, as they are used to lock up the prisoners during the Aspen prison riot, and must be destroyed if Rico's Janus plans are to be thwarted.



'Insufficient funds in your account. Please refer to your local branch.'







Mega-City One's equivalent to 'Challenge Anneka.' But not as fixed.

COMMENT



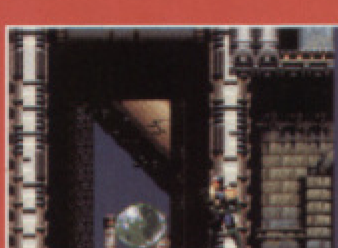
STEVE

Hmmm, never before have I been so split over a game. Whilst Judge Dredd is obviously yet another run-off from the Stargate/Alien 3 game engine, it is very faithful to both the film and comics, with neat touches lifted from each throughout. Graphically, it's no great shakes, with small uninteresting sprites and moderately detailed backdrops, but there are loads of small touches which are guaranteed to make ardent Dredd fans happy. A perfect example of this is the way Probe have made the Lawgiver power-ups integral to the game. Whilst Ricochet bullets and Boing could have been just two more weapon ideas, both are essential during some of the levels — for instance, only Boing can stop the Dark Judges returning from the Dead World. Yet whilst the weaponry system works in this respect, the gun JD initially uses features the weakest bullets ever, with some baddies requiring dozens of hits before they fall over. The main problem Dredd suffers from is a lack of imagination, and that's what stops it becoming a MegaGame. We've seen the Stargate engine too many times now, and whilst Dredd is the most effective use of its 'platform and flying sequence' levels to date, I came away thinking more could have been done with it. Still, Judge Dredd does indeed have plenty of levels and a variety of bad guys — if not wildly different level objectives — and plays every bit as well as Alien 3 whilst being heaps better than the dull Stargate. However, Alien 3 is knocking on a bit now, and this just doesn't offer enough extras to make it an absolute classic. Drokk! As Joe would say...

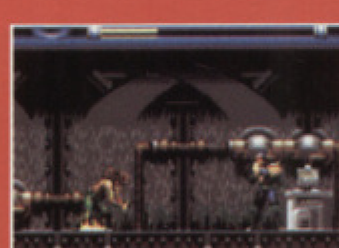




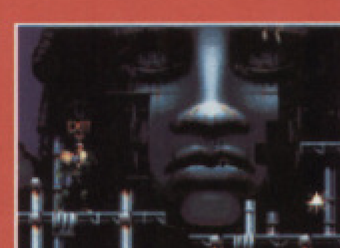
INCENDIARY: Boss material — saps energy fast!



BOING: When the spectral shape of an escaping Dark Judge appears, switch to this.



HEAT-SEEKING: Useful if a perp is firing from above.



FLARE: Found in Dead World, and speeds up the demise of Death, Mortis and co.

GRAPHICS — 81

▲Dredd fans will be pleased with the instantly recognisable sprites and backdrops. Brilliant Dark Judges sprites.
▼The small size of the sprites makes everything look a bit wimpy.

ANIMATION — 74

▲The sprite runs, crawls, kneels, fights, and climbs just like the comic and movie Dredd.
▼The perps are a bit lacking in the movement department.

MUSIC — 53

▼An appalling intro dirge, and absolutely stuff-all in the game itself.

EFFECTS — 32

▼ Rather wimpy gun noises, and similarly dull in-game action grunts and crashes.

PLAYABILITY — 81

▲Although the similarities to Stargate are obvious, this is the best use of it yet. The levels are large with a variety of weapons to use strategically against the many perps. A definite challenge.

LASTABILITY — 79

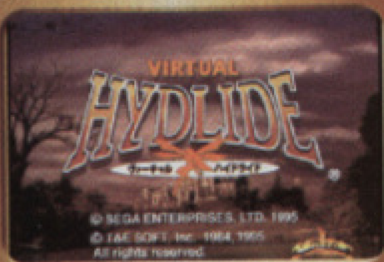
▲Fine and dandy. The thirteen worlds are split into three sub-games, offering mucho lasting appeal. The bosses are real toughies.
▼A little more variety wouldn't have gone amiss — the levels are all very samey.

OVERALL

A little familiar-looking, but Dredd is still a very playable and big platformer. More originality would have been nice.

80

VIRT
HYD



BY T&E SOFT

RELEASE IMPORT

PRICE IMPORT

GAME TYPE RPG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
DIFFICULT

ORIGIN

VH's Ideas are common to many RPGs. The 3D engine used looks very similar to the one T&E Soft developed for Pebble Beach Golf on Saturn.

GAME AIM

Free the captive Princess from the clutches of the Evil Mage, by visiting a series of his strongholds, killing things and collecting items.

BEAT THIS

140,000

She called herself the Princess, and lived in a large castle, by a lake, on a vast country estate. In reality, her father had been born the son of an innkeeper, and had gone on to make a fortune selling bootleg grog to the local Dwarvish community, who were permanently legless.

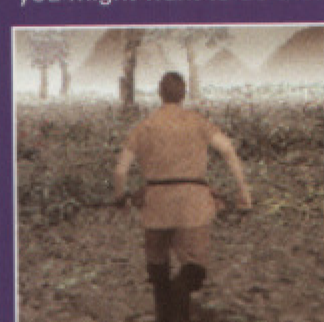
With pots of cash, she had all the things that money could buy, and a stream of male admirers. But fame and fortune can be an ill-fitting tiara. The 'Princess' discovered as much when a large demon arrived at the castle, smashed a large picture window and encased the unfortunate girl in a large marble, before bogging off back to the netherworld. Word got around, naturally, and would-be adventurers started trying to work out from whence the demon had came, and what sort of cut of her fortune they could expect when they freed her (rumour had it that she was a bit tasty, so marriage was considered an added bonus). They needn't have bothered — they all failed miserably, meeting grisly ends. But at least there wasn't as many romantic fools wandering around seeking adventure. Except one — you.





YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HYDLIDE

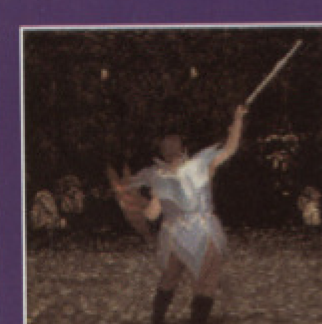
Your character, let's be familiar and call him Bob, is viewed from behind, from a position you might be in if you wanted to goose him. But you don't and you can't. Instead, you might want to do these things with him.



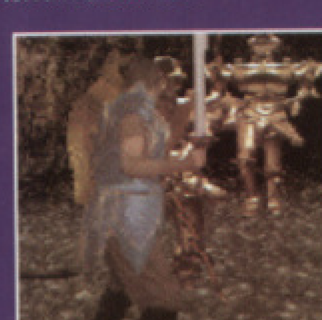
RUN
(X BUTTON + UP) Double speed for crossing large terrain distances.



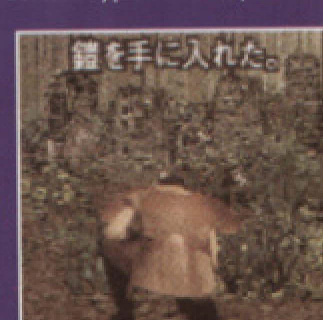
SIDE SLASH
(B BUTTON) A slash aimed at the midriff, for certain types of weapon.



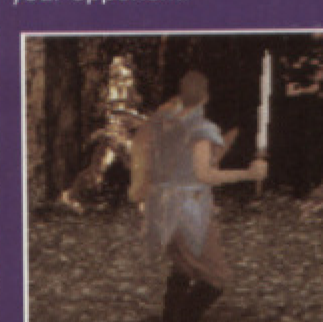
HEAD SLASH
(C BUTTON) A crashing blow aimed at the head of your opponent.



PARRY
(A BUTTON) Defensive move of dubious effect. Best attempted with a shield.



GET
(X BUTTON) Use when near objects to bend down and pick up.

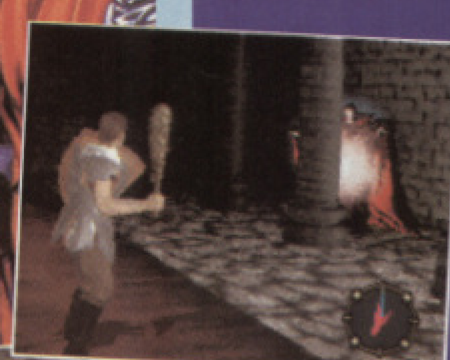


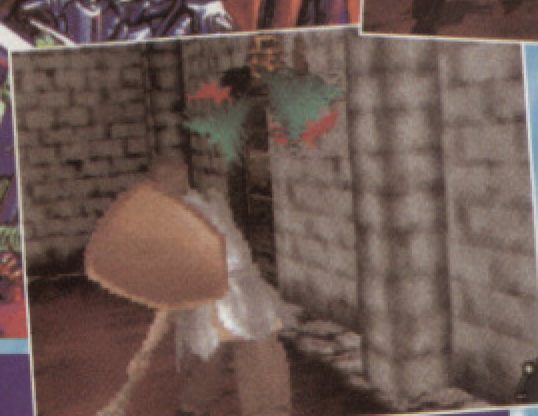
SIDE STEP
(L/R BUTTONS) Prevent enemies outflanking you in combat.

ARMOU







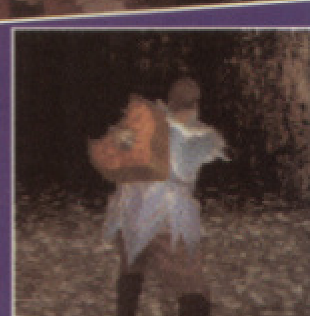


UR









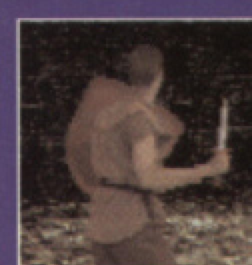
CHESTY COFFERS

Virtual Hydlide is a collect-as-you-go game. A plethora of objects, useful and dud alike, lie for the taking in most locations. Once you get an object, you can manipulate it in the inventory, called up with button Z. One press of Z brings up a panel with various jap stats. The set of three numbers on the left is your offensive capability. Those on your right are defensive. The single numeral above is your level. As that increases, your Hit Points, attack and defensive power and maximum 'encumbrance' increases.

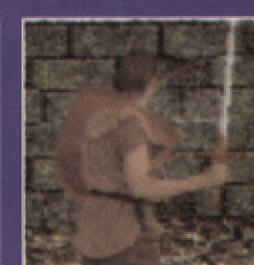
Did someone say 'encumbrance'. Well in adventure speak, that's basically how much you can carry. The top choice on the options screen brings up your inventory. To the right of this are four numbers easily identifiable as weights (since they bear 'Kg' suffixes). The top two represent what you are actually carrying, the bottom two what you are permitted to carry (this rises with level). The bottom number in each pair represents your 'battle weight' — weapons, armour, rings, pendants etc. You may not exceed your allowance for this, which explains why some weapons are unequippable. The other number, your total weight may be exceeded, but you will get slower and less agile if you do.

Yeah, but what about the goodies. Well, some items are equipped and used constantly until upgraded, some are used once, and some are magical and have specific purposes. Oh, and some are cursed:

WEAPONS



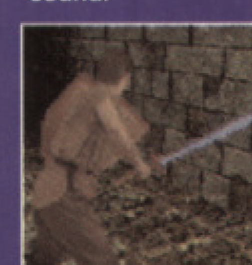
DAGGER
Pretty crap, but can be thrown.



CUTLASS
Nice swishing sound.



CLUB
Straight and too the point.



SWORD
Knife through butter springs to mind.



AXE
Luvverly! Here's Johnny.

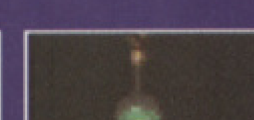
FINGS



CRUCIFIX



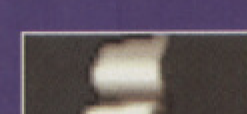
PLANT



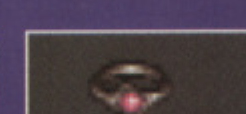
POTION



STAFF



SCROLL



RING



LAMP



THE REGENERATION GAME

Virtual Hydlide tackles repetition by incorporating a landscape generator, effectively altering the world layout each time you play. The game selects a code, or invites you to enter one of your own. The game is wholly random, of course. Within the terrain map are various 'dungeons' where you must complete specific tasks before returning to the main game. The location and layout of these areas changes each time you play, but the basic enemies and decor remain.

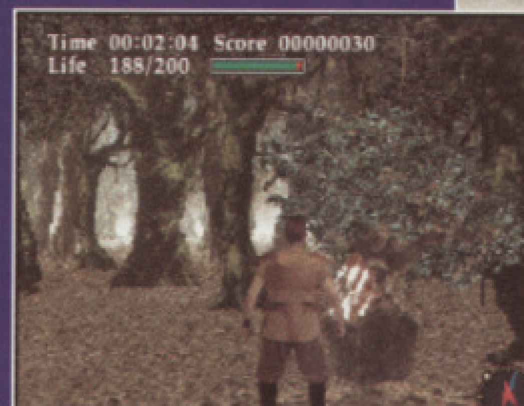
PLAIN



STONE BRIDGE

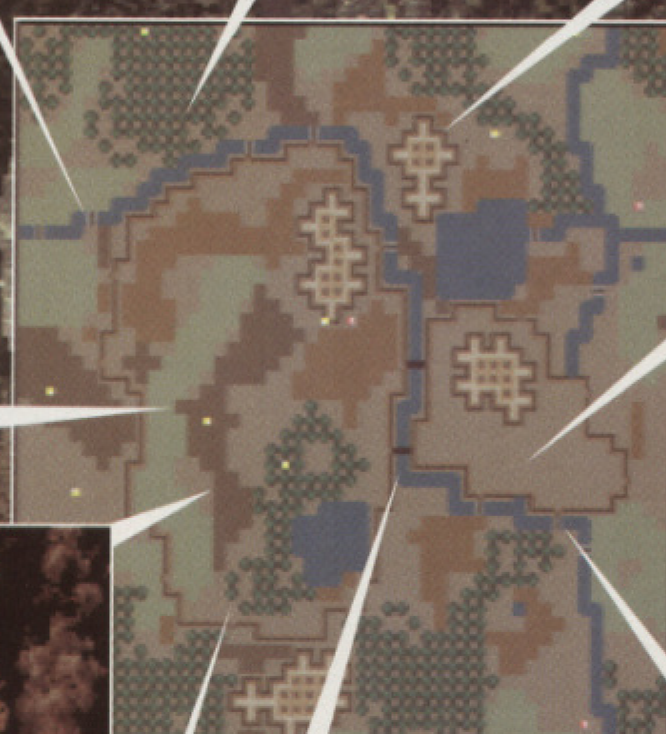


FOREST



VAMPIRE LAIR





MAZE



FIRE CAVERN



DUNGEON



ROPE BRIDGE



GRAVEYARD



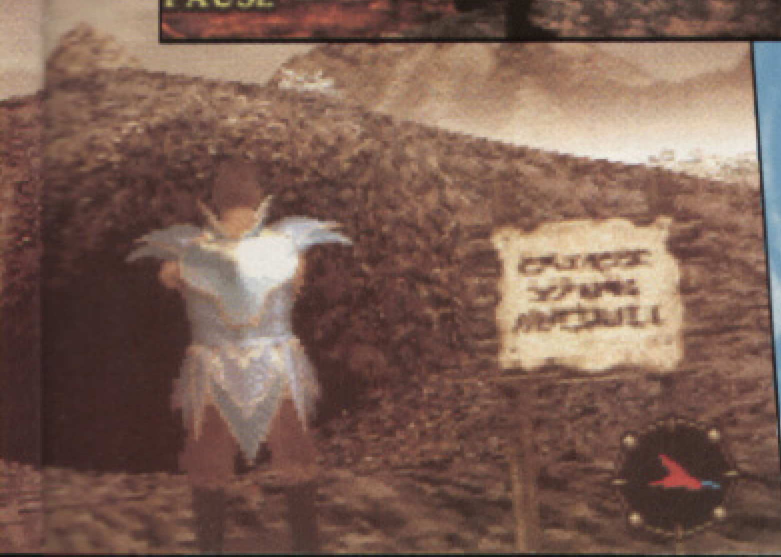
WORDS FAIL ME

Few copies of Hydlide are being imported at present, as most importers think it is unplayable. This is not the case, as it leans towards action rather than puzzles, and the jist of most text can be deciphered. Of course, it would all be more enjoyable, and less problematic in English. And in time it shall be.









COMMENT



GUS

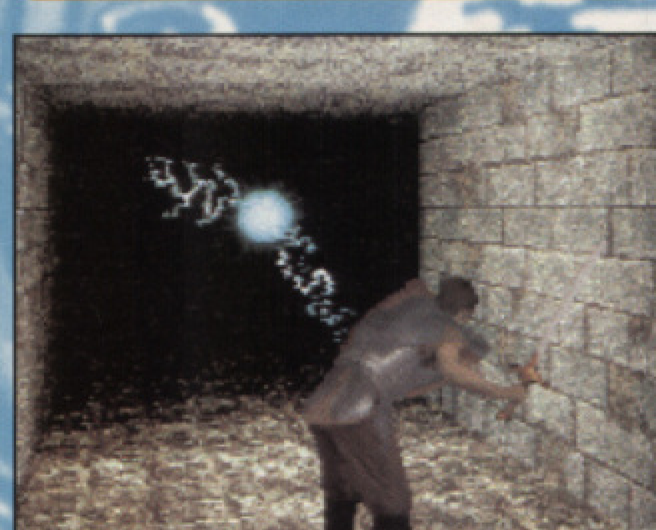
After months of wondering what this curious game would entail, it turns out to be a hack and slasher which is slightly rougher than Jimmy Nail with a 10-pint hangover, but not without a definite appeal. The 3D viewpoint is novel and works to the extent that you get a reasonably believable graphic environment, whilst keeping the control system manageable and responsive. This is good, as you spend more time fighting creatures in realtime than anything else, and the control is responsive enough to allow you to use timing and tactics. Ok, it's not combat at a Streetfighter level, or dungeoneering at Doom standard, but somehow the atmosphere makes up for many of the shortcomings. Being more critical, the game design is linear, despite the landscape generator, and the somewhat pot-luck nature of cursed items and poison potions irritates occasionally. But the odd clever puzzle, impressive effect or fun weapon (I have the axe in mind) makes it more than an average effort.

COMMENT



PAUL

In japan RPGs are still the biggest selling titles on all consoles, and with this in mind the Saturn desperately needed a quality debutant in the guise of Hydlide. The end result is, however, a bit on bitty side, and doesn't fulfill its potential to be a true classic. The perspective has admittedly been carefully calculated, but there are numerous occasions when confusion takesover, forcing the player to constantly refer to the map. But when it comes to the graphics — oh deary me! The pixelisation and jerkiness are unforgivable for a machine as powerful as the Saturn. The plot may be engrossing and well structred at times, but when you're looking at the back end of a bus, this can only struggle to place Hydlide in the minor league of new titles.



GRAPHICS — 82

▲The graphics create an effective atmosphere and contain several novel ideas.
▼Generally drab, and recurrent problems with sprite blockiness.

ANIMATION — 68

▲Very nice combat animation on Bob. Full 3D manipulation of environment. Lots going on at once.
▼Jerkiness of screen update is very noticeable.

MUSIC — 81

▲Some sombre and atmospheric tunes in places.
▼Occasionally the music descends into unwelcome Jap pop pap.

EFFECTS — 92

▲Superb throughout, without criticism. Slashings, groans, creaky doors and clangings. Background noise gets louder and quieter as you progress.

PLAYABILITY — 85

▲The game eases you in, with objectives clearly marked. There's quite a high action quotient too.
▼Simplistic and maybe slightly confusing in Japanese. The 'chance' elements sometimes make it unfair.

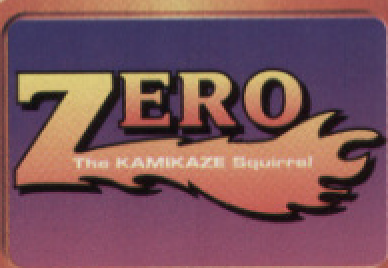
LASTABILITY — 77

▲The hi-score table is a novel and unexpected feature, and the random generator recreates the game each time.
▼ On all but the hardest level, not a vastly challenging experience.

OVERALL

Virtual Hydlide's novelty factor shouldn't be under-estimated, and it is quite an ingenious game. The Saturn's first dipped-toe into adventure gaming works quite well.

83



BY	MARUBENI
RELEASE	OUT NOW
PRICE	£44.99
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM
PLAYERS	1
MEG	8

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
YES

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

Previously starring as Aero the Acrobat's arch-rival, Zero takes centre stage in his own platform adventures.

GAME AIM

Battle against the forces of evil lumberjack Jacques Le Sheet, and free the liccle forest creatures from the matchstick factory.

BEAT THIS

COMPLETE SECTION 2

ZERO
The KAMIKAZE Squirrel





As Darth turned to the good side of the Force; as the T-1000 came back to help John Connor; as Knuckles turns up to help Sonic; so too Zero the Kamikaze Squirrel has returned from his devilish exploits of the original Aero the Acrobat outing to rescue the fluffy creatures of the forest from certain doom at the hands of matchstick-monger Jacques Le Sheet.

Flipping and flopping his way through seven baddie layered levels of the kingdom that used to be his forest, Zero has only his wits, shiruken, and swooping dive attack at his disposal and defence. Can he clear his beloved land of robotic undesirables, or will the forces of evil rule the day and strike a light with the flora and fauna?





The first boss, it's wall crabbingness and it's mysterious human operator.

COMMENT



PAUL

Zero has all the makings of a fine platform game — a vibrant central character, varied and challenging locations, interesting bonus levels to discover, and sufficient colour and visuals to stimulate the imagination. Add to this the established heritage of the previous platform romp; and the end result is a solid cart. But saying this, the overall feeling you get from playing the game is most definitely 'seen it, done it, played it yesterday!' Undoubtedly all the best elements of Zero can be found elsewhere in your cart collection, and unless you have a serious case of nostalgia for the characters from the first offering, think twice before investing.





AIR HEAD

Zero heads up, up, and away into the skies to the realm of the cloud kingdom in a series of hot air balloons for serious pick 'em up action. To cast off into the stratosphere, Zero has to first slice the securing rope and then step a double jump into the basket. Once airborne, the balloon can be coaxed from left to right for optimum goodie collection, but watch out for the self-destruct mechanism that activates at maximum altitude.







Zero does his thang, and God, isn't it thril-ing?å



DOWN AND OUT

Perhaps the most important move in Zero's repertoire is his ability to swoop down and up in a U-shape motion through tunnels and tight corners. To perform the Super Dive, firstly our squirrel friend must leap as high as possible into the air and nose dive in true kamikaze style towards the floor. But just before he hits the floor, Zero must use all of his might to break the descent and change direction; swooping across and up to safety.





COMMENT



GUS

If I've I sat down to play a game like this once, I've sat down to write the accompanying comment a thousand times. This is an okay platform game. What's more to say? Nothing there to frighten the horses or present a particularly memorable challenge to the class of Megadrive owner still gamely exchanging money for games. No wonder they are a dying breed. Although Zero is a pleasantly crafted piece of work, with nice graphics and clever diving control, it has much of the character of in-flight catering. The calories are all present, but the experience seems to lack something, especially with the wealth of gourmet carts out there.

All bandanna wearers are freaks.





BOUNCY BONUS



In a bizarre sort of airbed fetish, Zero has to create his own portals to the land of the bonus level. Dotted through the various locations, footpumps attached to deflated mini bouncy castles require pressure from the squirrel to open the gateway to another dimension. Don't get too frisky with that pump, mind, as one pump too many and bang go your chances of a bonus. The footpumps can also be used as springboards to those hard to reach levels.

GRAPHICS 81

▲Bold colourful locations that speed past at a turbo-charged pace.

▼But never breaks the tradition platform mould enough to offer anything

ANIMATION 80

▲Nicely created characters, especially the animation for the swoops and flik-flaks.

MUSIC 79

▲Run-of-the-mill tunes. Again it doesn't offer anything new.

EFFECTS 82

▲Cool swoops and swishes. A good meaty thump when Zero hits the ground face first.

PLAYABILITY 83

▲A nice build up for the challenge factor, although the Super Dive Tests will have some stumped for a while.

LASTABILITY 81

▲Can be tricky at times, so you won't whizz through the levels.

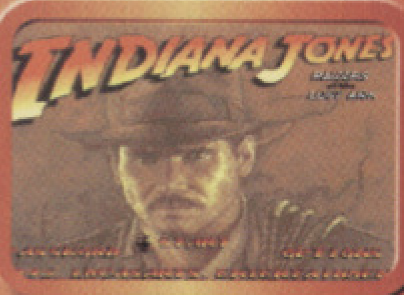
▼Seven levels isn't really a great deal.

OVERALL

A healthy portion of platform action, but one that we've seen time and time before.

82

INDI
Gre



BY: U.S. GOLD

RELEASE: JUNE

PRICE: £39.95

GAME TYPE: PLATFORM

1 PLAYERS

16 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
3-5

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
Good

ORIGIN

Indiana Jones is based around all three block-buster movies, Raiders Of The Lost Ark, Temple Of Doom, and The Last Crusade.

GAME AIM

Guide Indy through levels of platform action whipping and shooting Nazi's, and generally getting into sticky situations.

BEAT THIS

Complete the Cairo section.

They thought the mild mannered Englishman could never be pushed over the edge. But as the queues filled out with hundreds of OAPs, their hands holding carrier bags packed with tatty lime green crockery, Hugh Scully realised that he simply couldn't take another series of the Antiques Roadshow. The mocking and self-satisfied laughter of Lovejoy echoed in his ears. The good old days were over So picking up a couple of 17th century French muskets he turned to his fellow experts and said triumphantly "In the memory of Arthur Negus I am leaving this place, and going in search of real antiquities from exotic lands!" Opening his briefcase he took out a hat and a whip, put them on, and sprinted dramatically out of Chiswick sports centre. He was last seen being dragged behind a rusty Marina on its way to Baghdad!

We join Hugh as his alter-ego, Indiana Jones, in this multi-style adventure game that incorporates exhilarating action from all three blockbuster movies, beginning with the cave in South America where Indy's attempt to secure the golden idol is hindered by a rather large boulder!





Those who know our adventuring archeologist know that he is rarely without his whip. It plays a big part in the game, too, with Indy using it to lash at foes and to swing across chasms too wide to jump. Likewise, a pistol becomes readily available and anyone who remembers the scene with the sword slashing Arabian knight in Raiders of the Lost Ark will laugh when the scene is recreated for one of the game's bosses! When Indy finds himself without a weapon he is forced to rely on his trusty fists to pummel enemies into oblivion.







COMMENT

On the whole, platformers are a pretty average breed — the all too familiar cry of 'not another movie to platform conversion' too frequently ringing in reviews. But as they have demonstrated on the Super NES in the case of the Star Wars trilogy, LucasArts know how to deliver the goods — and Indiana Jones is no exception. The levels are long, varied, and stuffed to the brim with spectacular power-ups, and even though some of the situations are a case of trial and error, the restart points are never far away. If you're as much of an Indy fan as young Osmond Browne, I guarantee you won't be disappointed.

PAUL

MR MOTIVATED

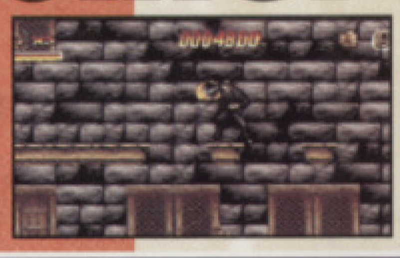
Indiana Jones is just about the most athletic antiques dealer on the planet and the game incorporates a few of his characteristic talents. The body roll for example enables him to dodge oncoming dangers or roll under the tiniest of gaps. Another of Indy's specialities is hanging on to platforms by no more than his finger tips. Indy also finds himself doing a lot of running, from trundling boulders or speeding hay carts.



Indy being chased by arse fluff. Yep.

...ANA JONES' ...eatest Adventures





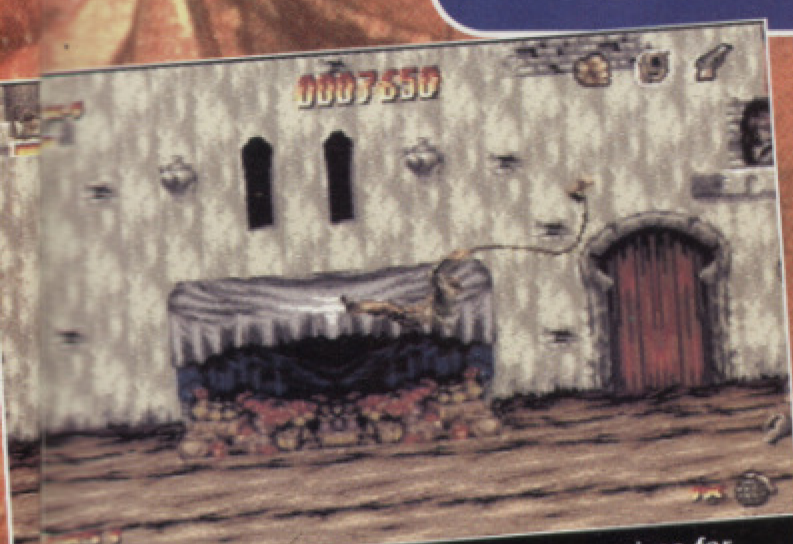


3D INDY

Besides the familiar platform bits, there are intermission sections that change in style completely to spice things up a bit. Take the infamous mine cart scene in Temple of Doom — this is translated in the game into a hair-raising head-on 3D extravaganza. Or how about Indy and pop trying to escape the Nazi's in a biplane in a slick 3D dogfight!



Look, gen-u-ine Mode 7 gubbins on the Megadrive. Stick that up your bums SNES owners. Apart from Andy on NMS. He's Ok.



...y swinging. Actually, a 'Swinger' swaps wives for ...dies with close friends. Or complete strangers.



COMMENT



GUS

More than anything it is the attraction of the legendary movies themselves that succeed in giving this game a head start. The programmers have remained largely faithful to the atmosphere of the films, even if they've taken liberties in order to turn it into an exciting game. The film stills that appear between levels and the infamous map travelling sequences that pop up at the end of stages ensure that the flavour of the heroic adventurer's various struggles is reflected in the gameplay. Indy moves with that hectic finesse he's famous for and his versatility is impressively rendered in the animation. The game does have its faults, though. The abrupt changes in difficulty sometimes lead to frustrating deaths that are only avoided once you're more than familiar with the territory. This niggle aside, Indiana Jones is ultimately satisfying to play and damn long, too, spread out over loads of action-packed levels. Fans of the films, of which there are more than a few, won't be disappointed.

GRAPHICS — 76

▲Impressively recreated atmosphere of the film and the Indy sprite moves with the agility of the man himself!

ANIMATION — 76

▲The sprite leaps, runs, rolls and punches every bit as well as Harrison Ford (and his stunt double) did.

MUSIC — 84

▲The tunes are faithful to those well known and loved movie airs.z

EFFECTS — 57

▲The effects are suitably up to scratch, and vary throughout the game.

PLAYABILITY — 82

▲Loads of action to keep you on your toes.
▼Some parts in the game have a habit of getting furiously frustrating.

LASTABILITY — 84

▲It isn't an overly easy game and the 28 levels should keep even an accomplished player well occupied.

OVERALL

It doesn't break any new ground but is fast, exciting and full of variety. The films have been done justice.

84



BY SEGA

RELEASE JUNE

PRICE £49.99

GAME TYPE SHOOT EM UP

1-2 PLAYERS

24 MEG

BREAK DOWN

OPTIONS
CONTROL JOYPAD
GAME DIFFICULTY HARD
CONTINUES 9
SKILL LEVELS 3
RESPONSIVENESS EXCELLENT

ORIGINALITY

ORIGIN
It's odds-on the Motherbase team were inspired by the seminal Zaxxon, and the excellent Viewpoint on NEO GEO.

CHALLENGE

ACTION

GAME AIM
Fly on, fly on, dark angel, bringing death and destruction to all you encounter. And nick lots of enemy 'motors'.

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

BEAT THIS 100,000

MOTHE

Anyone who plays this game will say it's a bit of an Alan B'stard, so let's look at its parentage. Motherbase is something you'd call a hybrid. Influences of all sorts of past blasters and blasts from the past have found their way into the latest shoot 'em up for a machine not exactly short of them; Star Wars, Stellar Assault, Space Harrier, Metal Head...

The principal influence is clearly Zaxxon, well over a decade old, and the first blaster to use the isometric 3D viewpoint. Talking Viewpoint, Motherbase clearly has inspiration from the game of that title, a Zaxxon homage on the NEO GEO, and one of the few decent games for that system. They have in common the use of polygons to construct the sprites and bosses of the game (though Viewpoint's, it must be said, are rather more complex). Finally, there's a definite resonance with Xexex, a lukewarm coin-op that featured a strange tentacle device that attached to your enemies and nicked their powers. So what does all this cross-breeding produce? Mongrel or Pit Bull?



Brittania Airways find a novel way to overcome flight delays at Lanzarote airport.



The battle moves to outer-space. Get out the glitter wigs and tin-foil keks!

CYBER FREAKS

Most of the levels seem to have a distinctive plotted feel, with major enemies recurring, and recognisable sequences developing. Level two, for example sees you under attack from a squadron of transformer robot-bombers on a narrow landing strip, and the mega robot of level one is a particularly sticky customer:



1. You find robot waiting, and he launches a surprise smart bomb attack.



2. After you pass, robot flies on ahead and knocks out ventilators, leaving deadly gaps into space.



3. Robot attacks again with hand-launched blue fire attacks.



4. Whilst battering at the end of level door, you concentrate on the floor supports.



5. With the supports destroyed, mega robot plummets into deep space.

RBASE

POLY-WANT-A CRACKER

Motherbase mixes both conventional sprite scrolling and polygon graphics. The backgrounds look familiar, but all of the ships, and many landscape features like pylons, are polygons. The flexibility of polygons is exploited with scaling effects and complex manipulation, like the impressive sharks of stage four, or huge, scary boss of stage three.







Just one of the many bangs you'll encounter.

'ELLO JOHN GOT A NEW MOTA!

The core feature of Motherbase is the ability for your little ship to leapfrog from ship to ship, using their features to power-up. There are a selection of power-up ships that descend throughout the level, but even more striking is that you can hijack just about any enemy ship for your own purposes. Literally turning the enemies' guns upon them. This space 'jacking' takes place in four stages.

1: JUMPING

Your ship gets into a position to leap on the exposed core of the enemy ship.



2: HACKING

Once in, there is a brief period of invulnerability, while you assume control.



3. LEARNING

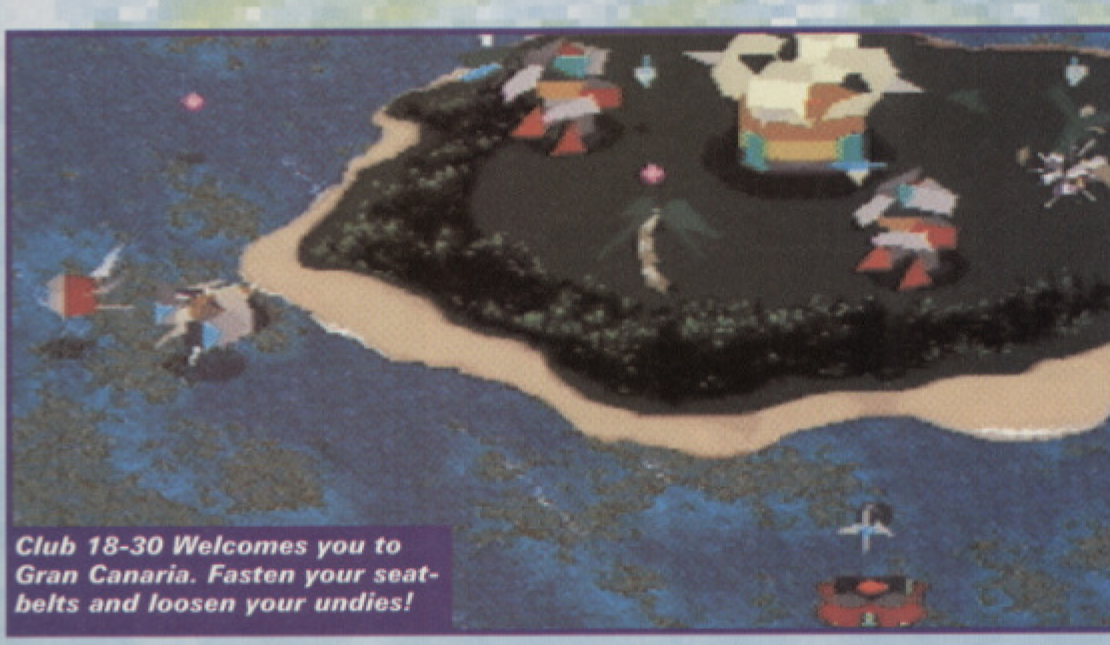
A signal of 'Ready' shows that you have learned the enemy's weaponry. If you leave now you will retain its attacks.



4: EJECT

Jump to abandon the enemy,which resorts to hostile control. You can propel the craft you leave into other enemies.





Club 18-30 Welcomes you to Gran Canaria. Fasten your seat-belts and loosen your undies!

COMMENT



GUS

Initially, Motherbase looked as if had as much chance as Wales in the Rugby World Cup. But, wait, we have a contender! Although some of the backdrops look a bit grim, and the scrolling is jerk-esque to say the least, it's actually a rollicking good blast, as demonstrated from a lot of hours spent just cracking the first few levels. The game pivots around this idea of nicking the enemy ships, and it works brilliantly. There are so many strategies to develop with the range of potential firepower, and constant temptations to go for something a bit more upmarket. There's a hell of a lot going on at the quietest times, and the game offers a a rock challenge. The undeniably scruffy visuals of some parts are completely redeemed by some well-impressive polygon manipulation. This is distilled blasting, and firmly recommended to fans of Nemesis, Viewpoint or any of the old-style Megadrive blasters.

ENEMY FORCES

This constitutes just about every other ship in the game! The range of shapes and sizes is huge. Some are big and extremely powerful, others small and fast. All but a few disintegrate after a single hit. This is just a selection:

CRABS
Fire slow-moving circular shots in sprays.

THREE-WAY
Shots are fired three-way, with a bouncing bomb special weapon.

R-TYPE
With the memorable power-up bolt. Fast-moving.

BIG LASER
A huge, resilient machine with diagonal shots and a huge laser, but very slow.



FARTY MISSILE
Tiny, but nippy craft with a neat exhaust-trail weapon.

RIPPLE LASER
Distinctive ringed weapon, with protective fire on all sides.

MOTHER MISSILE
A real daddy craft. Poor offensive capability, but sustains huge damage.

BIRD HOUSE
Preposterous but tops edifice . Fires feathered emissaries of doom.



Rupert Murdoch's satellite armies prepared for the final assault on Earth TV critics.

COMMENT



STEVE

From the screenshots I saw of this during its development, I thought Motherbase was going to be a polygon-based Zaxxon clone — no bad thing, as Zaxxon was a cool coin-op, but not the stuff we want to grace 32bit machines. However, whilst Motherbase is an isometric blaster like the classic coin-op, it takes the basic idea and adds a brilliant 'ship-hopping' feature, breathing new life and strategies into a pretty shoot 'em up. The game features a host of smart ships, and leaping into them allows the player to pick up extra weapon functions and withstand crashes, and whilst this sounds a little clunky in theory, in practice it proves very simple, meaning that the frantic blasting action is never interfered with as the player progresses to the equaly-stunning bosses. This is a true 32bit shoot 'em up, and Sega have finally added a classic blaster to a machine which looked on its way out.

POWER EXTREME!

There is no limit to the number of times you can jump ship, in fact the more you do, the higher the end-of-level bonus. You may even re-enter the same ship. When a ship is damaged, smoke gives you a few seconds warning to eject. There is a vast range of ship models,. split into three types:

ADD-ONS

These are your own ships, and are quite rare. They appear during the levels. They will not attack. If you do not enter they will escort you, but are vulnerable. They normally take a few hits before exploding.

TYPE 1
Fires double lasers and special homing spikes. Quite fast.

TYPE 2
Big and slow, but has immensely powerful forward weapons.



TYPE 3
Strong forward lasers and homing missile attachments.

TYPE 4
Sprightly little single laser craft. Not bad at all.

POWER UPS



These appear as stationary red dials. You can move with them, but they are slow and poorly armed. However, the dials confer bonus items like extra lifes, smart bombs and flank protectors. Scoop these up and jump out.

GRAPHICS 83
▲Some well impressive polygon bosses, and a vast range of armaments.
▼Some of the graphics look scrappy and a bit grey.

ANIMATION 65
▲Interesting scaling of sprites into the action.
▼Appalling background scrolling, which gives the game an unpolished look.

MUSIC 84
▲Tons of pumping rave tracks, some of which are quite good.
▼Muffled 'rap' samples , which were a bit of a bad idea.

EFFECTS 79
▲Nice wooshes and klaxon effects.
▼The explosions are poor samples and the weapon sounds pretty unimaginative.

PLAYABILITY 87
▲Despite its ugly duckling appearance, a gripping shoot 'em up with some great ideas. Each level has been designed to test the player's nerve.

LASTABILITY 84
▲Very tough, but progress is gradually made, and the amount of continues stops you from getting discouraged.

OVERALL
A somewhat ugly blaster whose playability far exceeds its looks. The most concentrated action the 32X has seen yet.

86

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BY SEGA

RELEASE JUNE

PRICE £49.99

GAME TYPE SHOOT EM UP

PLAYERS 1-2

MEG 16

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
3

SKILL LEVELS
2

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

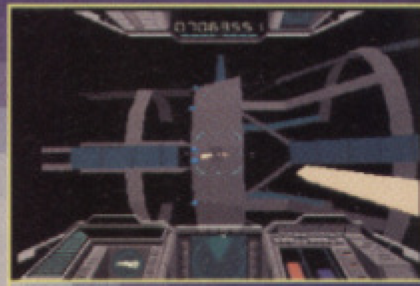
Star Wars inspired (both movie and game) blaster, with space furniture reminiscent of Battlestar Galactica.

GAME AIM

Destroy the huge armada of alien forces with your puny fighters.

BEAT THIS

2,000,000



Nobby aimed at the Death Girdle and fired.

STELLA

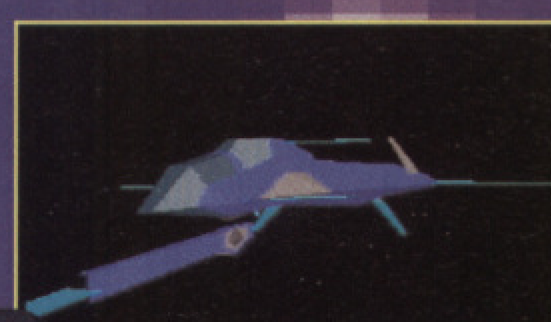
When Evil Cosmic Fanatics Inc. put in an order for six dozen 'rather large' space ships, you can bet on trouble. And so they have done in Stellar Assault, a spacey struggle with minimum plot and frills while also not-quite-lacking in the action department.
Having changed names more times than Julia Roberts (initially the suggestive 'Bullet Fighters', then the subtle 'Shadow Squadron') Stellar Assault works as a showcase for the 32X, a unit specifically designed for 3D games, and as an object lesson in the weaknesses of the seductive Virtua Star Wars, which ultimately turned out to be a little disappointing. A bit liek copping off which a girl who looks like a Goddess, but has the brain of a pork pie.



Er, Houston. I believe we have a problem.

RESURRECTED

Each time you play, either successfully or dismally, your performance will be recorded. This may be accessed through the trace mode, or by watching the game's demo. In true HowDidTheyDoThat? fashion, the 32X manages to switch camera angles and create a space movie out of your efforts. Whilst playing, pressing the joypad's Mode button gives you another (and more playable) virtual perspective.





COMMENT



GUS

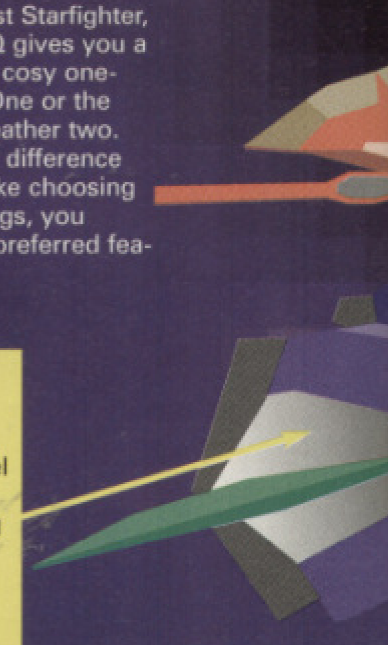
Stellar Assault turns out to be one of the most original variations on the space shoot 'em up for yonks. The idea of attacking huge ships, whilst having the freedom to navigate is novel, and the implementation is pretty impressive. The Feathers handle effortlessly and their weapons are quite neat, too. Each of the big ships has weaker areas, so there's a strategic element to completing each level whilst taking the least damage. Although the graphics appear a bit simplistic and Toytown next to Star Wars, they move far more smoothly and realistically. The other presentational features and options, especially the Trace Mode just add to the package, although I felt some of the stages were a little long-winded and took too long to complete.

NATURAL BORN

You're not quite the last Starfighter, you're the last two. HQ gives you a choice of two ships: a cosy one-seater called Feather One or the spacious dual-berth Feather two. Legroom isn't the only difference between them. A bit like choosing CD or sunroof or airbags, you select on the basis of preferred features:

FEATHER 1

* Fast firing dual positioned lasers.
* Separate shield and fuel energy.
* Multi-targetting homing missiles.
* Refuelling between each level.
* Additional force-field shielding device.



R ASSAULT



...w I have you!





Jacksi-directed death injection.

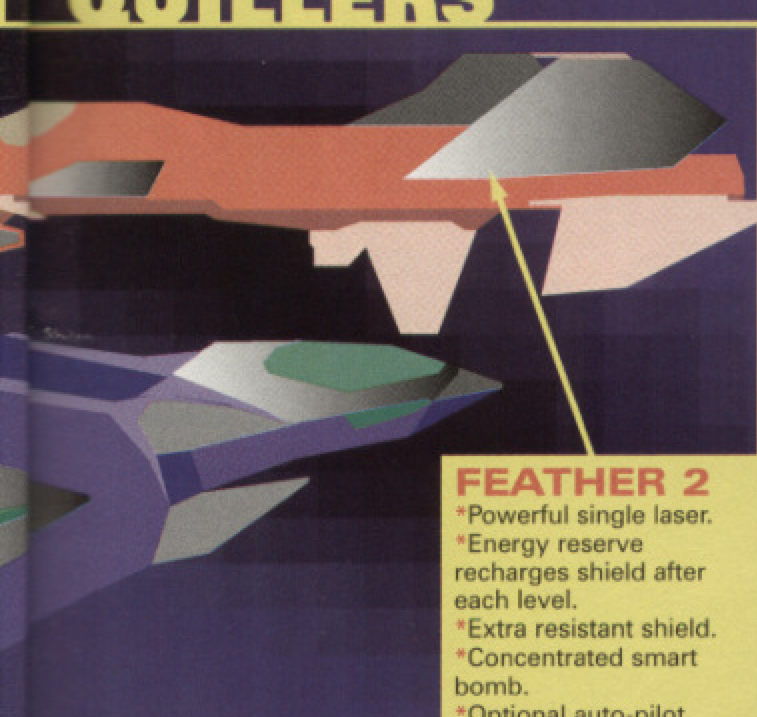
MUTHA SHIPS

Stellar Assault is distinguished by the scale of the enemy targets. Each mission consists of a clutch of massive star ships of various 'classes'. These don't succumb easily to weapons, so destroying them consists of a number of runs. Usually there is some other scenario; like escorting fighters or refuelling shuttles.





...L QUILLERS



FEATHER 2

*Powerful single laser.
*Energy reserve recharges shield after each level.
*Extra resistant shield.
*Concentrated smart bomb.
*Optional auto-pilot.

COMMENT



STEVE

Whilst Star Wars showed off the 32X's polygon routines, only after prolonged play did its limited nature become apparent. With Stellar Assault, Sega have come up trumps, producing a game which looks stunning and offers a huge world for the player to explore — none of that 'pre-determined route' stuff here. Until the advent of such 32bit machines, software houses' promises of 3D space dogfights have never lived up to the hype. With Stellar, however, the enemy ships whizz about in a style reminiscent of the Star Wars movies, and locking on and blowing them away proves both fun and satisfying. The missions are as varied as possible, and although the lasting appeal may be questionable, there's enough here to warrant return visits every now and then.

GRAPHICS 89

▲Huge imaginative polygon spacecraft, explosions and asteroids.

▼A simplistic feel to graphics overall.

ANIMATION 90

▲Wonderful sense of speed and movement, and zippy enemies.

▼No animation on the enemy craft.

MUSIC 74

▼The music for each level is generally dull and nondescript.

EFFECTS 86

▲The effects are far more atmospheric than the music. Thunderous explosions and screeching lasers.

PLAYABILITY 90

▲Gripping for its novel approached and excellent control.

▼Some stages go off the boil by being too long.

LASTABILITY 84

▲Very difficult on Hard with the first craft.
-Boredom with the game environment will set in after a while.

OVERALL

One of those rare games that both looks impressive and is satisfying to play. It's a blast.

80



BY: SEGA

RELEASE: IMPORT

PRICE: IMPORT (£80)

GAME TYPE: RPG

1 PLAYERS

24 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

CONTINUES: BATTERY SAVE

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: MEDIUM

ORIGIN

The fourth in a series of adventure games using the same characters and mythical world.

GAME AIM

Save the planet of Motavia by exploring the worlds of the Algo system. Oh, right.

BEAT THIS

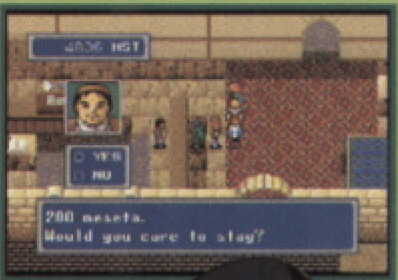
Find all 15 combo attacks.



It takes a special person to write the scripts for RPG games. For one, they have to think up all these exotic but oh-so-believable place and character names, ;like Lord Threngar of Astovan. Or Borix the dwarf ranger of Vistagoth. And then come up with magical items like 'The Mystical Eye gem of All Seeing'.
The Phantasy Star series of the cream of the crop in these respects. Each game in the quadrology is a huge adventure, with made-up names beyond the realms of possibilty. But the latest instalment, number four, is the biggest and most imaginative of the lot. Still set on Motavia, your band of characters face the threat of monsters and ecological decay as they unravel the mystery of an event 1000 years beforehand. As Sega haven't released a proper RPG in living memory, you'd think they would rush release this impressive game. Not a bit of it, as we may never see an official version on these shores.

SHINING LIGHT

The party moves round towns and settlements in a style similar to Shining Force, the other big Sega adventure series. You trail around towns and villages, solving puzzles, buying supplies and talking to the locals. When you get into areas of danger, things take a different turn.



COMMENT



GUS

Games like Soleil and Thor are alright, but many Sega owners are gagging for a decent RPG. It just isn't fair that the SNES gets all the Squaresoft and Final Fantasy games and the Megadrive gets zilch. That's why this game, despite its lousy graphics and uninspiring presentation grabs the attention. There's a story, good characters and piles of gameplay. It's also fairer than most RPGs, which seem to concentrate on killing you off immediately. There's no need to spend half an hour in the shops equipping gear before you set off, although powering-up your band becomes a satisfying part of the adventure later on. Although not moving the genre on significantly since the third in the series, Phantasy Star IV wins on sheer size and playability.







BATTLE FORMATION

You encounter many battle situations, many are randomly generated, but some are unavoidable. When a battle occurs you are presented with your foe(s). Characters have varying combat skills. All are able to fight with weapons, though warrior classes have access to more powerful items. Characters also employ skills and techniques. Many of these are offensive spells which harm enemies, though some enhance your team's own powers. The new feature of Phantasy Star IV is that some of the skills of two characters may be combined to produce customised attacks of massive power. The game challenges you to find all 15 of these.







"Excuse me, why are you writhing?". — "It's Friday". "Oh".





FOREIGN CAMPAIGN

We think Phantasy Star IV should get an official release. If you agree, contact Sega on 0171 373 3000 to register your opinion. Put your faith in the power of the popular voice.

I TRAVEL

The game begins on foot, with journeys around Motavia. As the game progresses, distances enlargen and other vehicles present themselves. Eventually you have the opportunity to travel through space via the Spaceport system, as part of your quest lies on neighbouring planets.



COMMENT



STEVE

Sega haven't released a proper RPG since, oh the end of WWII. Soleil and Thor are all very well, but they possess more action than strategic elements. Even Shining Force is more strategy game than adventure game. Whereas, Phantasy Star is pure, fulfilling adventure at its very best, if you like that sort of thing. The game hasn't progressed that much in content or appearance since the last instalment some two years ago, but new ideas have been explored, the potential area is much bigger and the graphics at least approach a standard we've come to expect. Some fanatics of the series in America have complained about inaccuracies and inconsistencies with previous episodes. Who cares, when the plot begins to take exciting twists and the dialogue remains sharp. This should come to the UK if there's any justice.

GRAPHICS — 48

▲ Neat design for the towns, battles and menus.

▼ No fancy graphics; titchy sprites and nasty scenery is the order of the day.

ANIMATION — 23

▼ Virtually non-existent in the game.

MUSIC — 59

▲ Sometimes the music goes all techno, lifting the game.

▼ Most of the music is aural wallpaper.

EFFECTS — 34

Like animation, the FX are barely discernible within the game.

PLAYABILITY — 90

▲ This RPG scores highly in the interest of its story, and easy to use menu system.

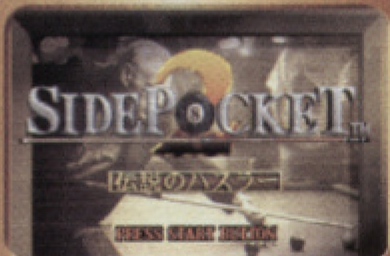
▼ No 'action' as such, joypad junkies.

LASTABILITY — 89

▲ Huge, huge, huge. And once you get in, you'll follow it to the finish.

OVERALL — 88

The best pure RPG for the Megadrive, but deemed fit only for the 'Land of the Free'. Denied!



BY DATA EAST

RELEASE NOW

PRICE IMPORT (£70)

GAME TYPE POOL

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
7

RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

ORIGIN

A not-too-different Saturn interpretation of an old arcade/Megadrive pool game.

GAME AIM

Play multifarious games of America's favourite billiards derivative, Pool.

BEAT THIS

TOURNEY SEMIS

SIDE POCKET 2

Playing good Pool is commonly seen as a sign of a misspent youth — years of bunking off double Maths and spending the afternoon in a smokey snooker club producing the most predigious of cue meisters. Data East are probably not going to dispell the image of the game with the digitised characters they've assembled for the Saturn edition of their old stalwart, Side Pocket. Travelling across America you encounter in turn; an old tart, who can't play for toffee; Bernard Manning and Roy Chubby Brown's retarded love-child dressed in a 'tux' and a sleazy lounge-lizard who favours white double-breasted cocktail suits; and that's just for starters. As for your character, well, how often do you get to play a coffin-dodger, whose pension extends to covering $800,000 stakes?

So, none of the cast are likely to get picked on Blind Date (though these days...) but it's their prowess with a pointy stick that's the issue, as well as how this CD collection of trick shots, pool variations and dodgy Muzak holds up.





COMMENT



GUS

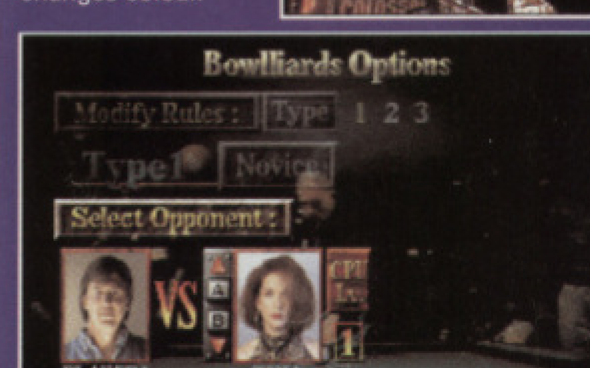
Although no one was expecting great things from pool, this is immediately disappointing because it fails to exploit the Saturn's capacity for displaying games in realistic 3D. If Archer Maclean can do it on the Megadrive, Data East should sure as hell give it a try on a 32bit machine.

Despite this, devotees of the game in its previous formats will find the same amount of options and game permutations, with slightly crisper, though flat, graphics. The music is still dreadful, in a compulsive kind of way, and the CPU reasonably challenging (although prone to some bizarre errors on the lower levels). No great surprises then, and no great leaps forward.

CANNONBALL RUN

Story Mode sees you playing the popular 8-ball game in a series of US cities, with snippets of FMV setting the scene for each confrontation. As you go, you stake your previous winnings against better and richer opponents. Though the game stays the same, the beize changes colour.









LOVE TRIANGLE

8-BALL: The 15 balls are split between stripes and spots (called 'solids' here). Players pot their types before going for the 8-ball.



9-BALL: Both players aim to pot the largest number of balls in a specific order.



BOWLLIARDS: A mixture of snooker and skittles. Both players are allowed two chances to rack up a score.



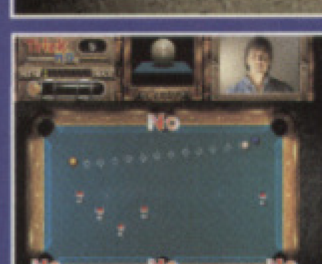
POCKET

I'M A VIRGO...

The 16 Trick shots form a separate part of the package. These set-pieces challenge you to pot balls in specific pockets, usually with obstacles to be avoided on the table. Each one has a particular method for success, and you can save your triumphs on the RAM memory.





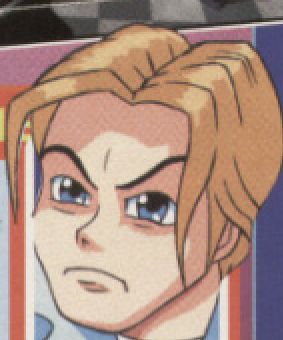


Mean Machines tip: play the real thing.



What a lot of old billiards.

COMMENT



PAUL

The original Side Pocket sunk without trace here, mainly because it was a bit crap. Logically, the Saturn version will do the same (if it ever makes it here) as it is crap in much the same way. Okay, it's slightly nicer to look at — a more refined turd, but in terms of recreating pool, which is a pretty atmospheric game, it fails. There is all the sophistication of a mid-1980s arcade cabinet, and I'd rate the Saturn as a better machine than that.

GRAPHICS 65

▲Crisp, with good ball movement and pleasant presentation.
▼-Disappointingly flat and unvaried table, and poor quality video footage.

ANIMATION 46

▲Reasonably convincing ball animation
▼No attempt to create a realistic cue or hand movement.

MUSIC 59

▲There are 35 count 'em, musical interludes.
▼Music to eat Big Macs to (want a copy, Fergie?)

EFFECTS 34

▼The ball noise is particularly unconvincing.

PLAYABILITY 62

▲Fun, in a limited sort of exasperating way.

▼Despite variations, very little variety, strangely.

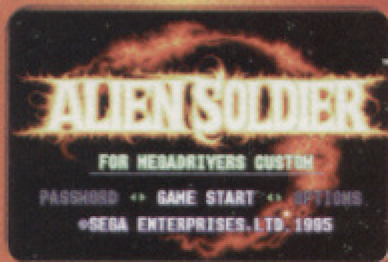
LASTABILITY 54

▲The trick shots and tournaments will take a while to unravel
▼The two player game is pretty dull.

OVERALL

Pool without the pull. Neither sleazy enough for pool hall punters, or exciting enough for casual punters.

58



BY: SEGA

RELEASE: MAY

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: PLATFORM

1 PLAYERS

16 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
ROCK

CONTINUES
INFINITE

SKILL LEVELS
2

RESPONSIVENESS
EXCELLENT

ORIGIN

Programmed by veteran development team, Treasure, Alien Soldier follows in the fine shooter tradition of Gunstar Heroes.

GAME AIM

Blast your way through level after level of boss-infested mayhem, armed with firepower galore.

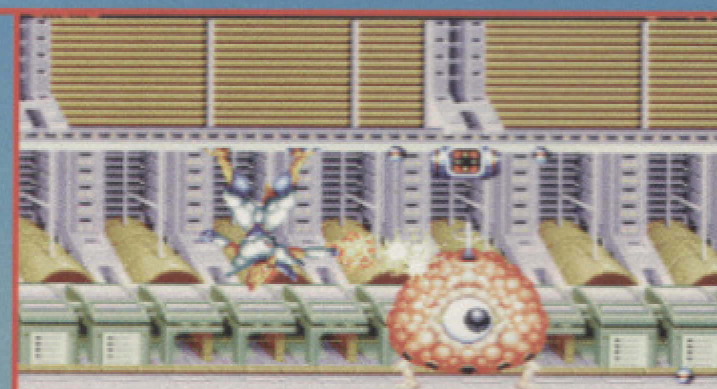
BEAT THIS

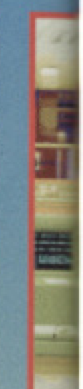
Get to the spider boss on the first day!

ALIEN SOL

Greetings comrades! I suppose you're wondering why I called this emergency meeting of the End-Of-Level-Boss Commitee. Well to be honest I'm fed up to the back teeth with complaints from you lot about the pay and conditions. You knew the workload when you started, you knew some of the heroes would get past you in the end. So what's the problem? I'll tell you what the problem is... Beak Face! He's back, and this time he's brought more weapons than we can hope to deal with. It's just too much. The only thing we can do is gang up and give him the fight of his life — something to really test the might of his fire power. We're going to take the fight to him and populate every level of his next adventure. Let's see him get through that one. Let's get to work!

The caption space only offers temptation for one-eyed monster jokes. Resist!



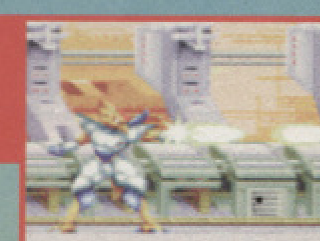


TOOLS OF THE TRADE

True to Treasure form they've gone completely overboard on the weapons up for grabs. What's more you have to pick four weapons from a selection before even starting the game. But choose your weapons carefully as tactics are the oder of the day when it comes to tackling some of the trickier bosses, and always bear in mind that no weapon is built to last.

BUSTER FORCE

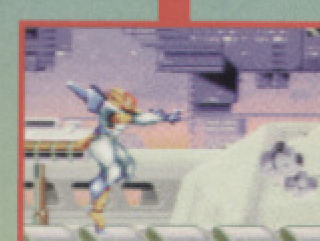
Rapid double punches of energy clear the path ahead. Fast, effective, but quick to run out.





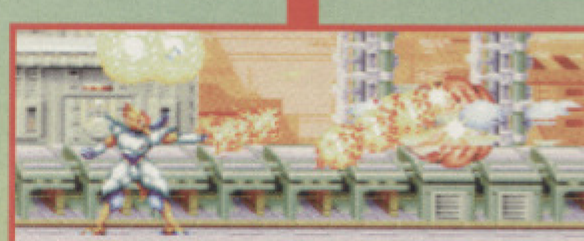
FLAME FORCE

A flamethrower of sorts, the flame covers a wide area and is extremely effective at close range.



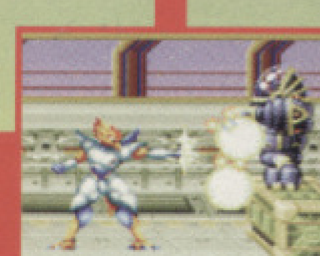
SWORD FORCE

The first of the needle lasers, sword releases pulses of laser in true swashbuckling fashion.



HOMING FORCE

The most user-friendly force available to beakface as it unleashes a guided death. Hampered by lack of range.



RANGER FORCE

Multi-directional spray of energy particles, this force comes into its own when dealing with hoardes of minor villains.



LANCER FORCE

A needle-like stream of condensed energy, the range is good, but needs precise targeting.





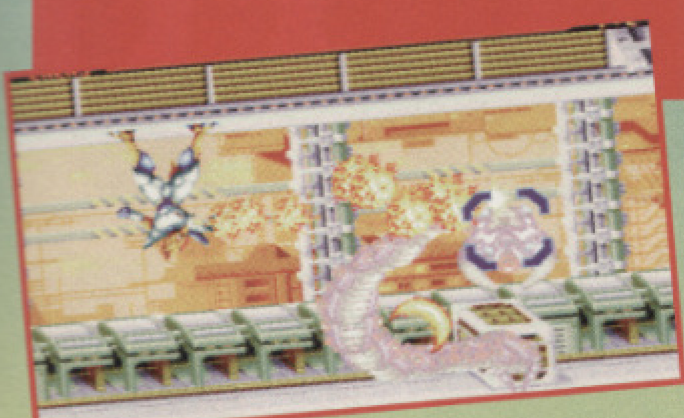


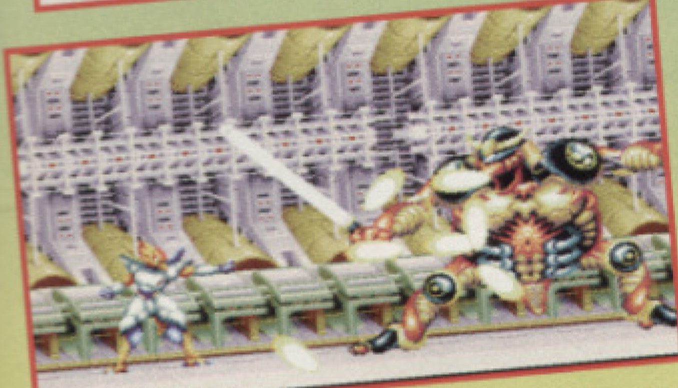


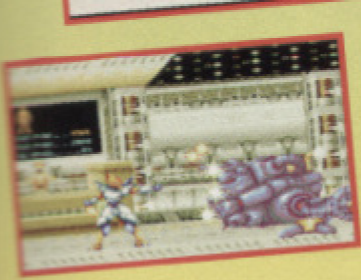
If you liked the fast and furious action of Gunstar Heroes, you'll love Alien Soldier. This is a real gamesplayer's game — the difficulty setting is on tough and the unrelenting waves of alien enemies in the mini levels prior to the bosses will have you running for cover. Talking of bosses, although the majority only take a couple of attempts to submit, don't be surprised if you find yourself stuck in front of a real meanie! Even though there's nothing revolutionary about the gameplay, the detail and challenge is so polished you get the feeling as soon as you start, that you are playing a classic. Go and have a go if you think you're hard enough!

THE BOSS

In an everyday scrolling platformer bosses spell doom for even the strongest of heart. Tactics are the order of the day when coping with the attack patterns of these beasts from the back of beyond. This is naturally emphasised by the fact that Alien Soldier is one long boss fest, each with its peculiar weaknesses and strengths, with strategies leading to each one's demise.





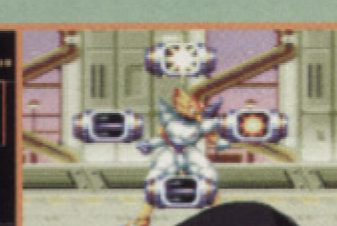




STATE OF THE WINDOW

Having an exhaustible weapon supply means a more sophisticated on screen stats display is required. From an amazing 26 variations you can choose to have your energy for both weapon and health in either numerical, or bar form, or hidden. The latter being for true hard blaster freaks who just don't care! Similar choices abound for indicating your opponent's power.





COMMENT



GUS

The pattern with Treasure games is beginning to establish itself. Whatever it is, it has to be different. This time, the traditional format of th shoot 'em up has been turned on its head. It's the bosses who take up the gameplay time — the minor baddies are relatively unimportant. At first, it looks like an idea too far, a recipe for disaster, but Alien Soldier is saved on the strength of its two dozen bosses. They are all well-designed, challenging and impressive to behold. This said, there is little of the technical experimentation seen on other Treasure games. But perversely, Alien Soldier ends ups having more variety than other sprawling long-levelled blasters.

GRAPHICS — 87

▲ Fast, furious, full of colour and explosions! Some fantasic designs for the bosses.

ANIMATION — 83

▲ Fluid movement of the large boss sprites and Epsilon.

MUSIC — 84

▲ Punchy, pumping tunes that set the pulse racing.

EFFECTS — 85

▲ Cool screams and squeals for the guns, and meaty FX to match the size and scale of the bosses.

PLAYABILITY — 86

▲ Hectic and exciting! The challenge is tough but oh so much fun.

▼ Initially the control system is a little troublesome.

LASTABILITY — 87

▲ Super tough challenge, piles of levels, and bosses galore! I think this will stand the test of time.

OVERALL

A modern classic that turns the concept of platfrom blasting inside-out, but that suffers from being a bit samey.

85



BY SEGA

RELEASE IMPORT

PRICE IMPORT (£80)

GAME TYPE PLATFORM

BREAK DOWN

1-2 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

OPTIONS
CONTROL
JOYPAD
GAME DIFFICULTY
VERY EASY
CONTINUES
UNLIMITED
SKILL LEVELS
1
RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

CHALLENGE

ORIGIN
A classic no-brainer platform game, with fire, ice and desert levels to boot.

ACTION

STRATEGY

GAME AIM
Rescue the flaxen-haired, pure-white besmocked virgin from the evil ogre.

REFLEXES

BEAT THIS
Finish it.



ASTAL

Maybe 'pastel' would be a better name than 'Astal' for this new cutesome platformer from Sega Japan. It's perfectly tailored to the emerging Saturn market over there — visuals that outdo Laura Ashley on Acid; incredibly unchallenging gameplay (with infinite continues in case you were born with a sixth finger and no thumb) and little girls with squeaky voices and triangular eyes. Well, at least there's no dolphin eating.

But there is an ogre. One of those who like to capture little girls and chain red-headed gnomes to planets before sending them into a distant part of the universe devoid of life, karaoke and raw fish. You, playing the red-head, rebel against the offence, and set off to head-butt the entire cosmiverse en route to the ogre showdown.

MY WHOLE WIDE WORLD WENT ZOOM

Astal makes prominent and ingenious use of the Saturn's custom scaling effects. These are most conspicuous during the boss sequences, where the third dimension of screen depth is utilised, as well as monsters growing and shrinking. In the final confrontation you have to hurl trees into the background. Scaled perspectives are also used during the levels. In one sequence, the panorama widens to show a volcano erupting in the background, with rocks hurled into the foreground.

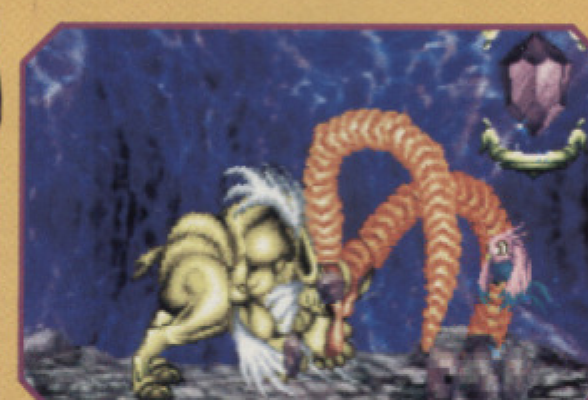


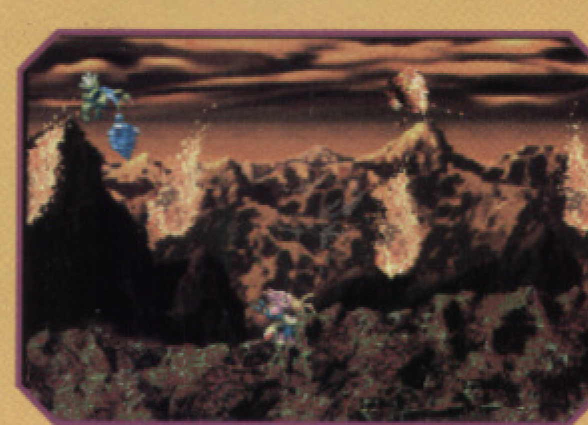
COMMENT



PAUL

Time to get tough on the Saturn stuff. By now we know what the machine can do: now let's see what the game designers can do with it. Almost matching Astal's meticulous beauty, is its complete lack of original gameplay. Some of the sections are presented in an original fashion, with boat rides and erupting volcanoes, but the skills demanded of you as you progress through the game are the most basic imaginable. Astal is utterly linear, with no deviations, interludes or choices presented to the player. Yet another weakness is the boss characters, which initially amaze only to prove incredibly easy to defeat with their basic unintelligent behaviour. Sadly, we must wait for Shinobi X for a platform game worthy (hopefully) of the machine.





COMMENT



GUS

Sega still need to get their act together as far as platform games on the Saturn. The amount they've churned out on the Megadrive over six years confirms their expertise, so the failure of Astal, along with Clockwork Knight is puzzling. Although substantially bigger and miles prettier than the Clockwork disappointment, Astal is tailored to the sad games skills of the Japanese market. Too many lives, too short levels, infinite continues. Stunningly pretty as the game is, you'll clock it in a couple of days, and hardly at a push. The bosses represent most of the high points of the game, showcasing the amazing transparency, scaling and lighting effects the Saturn is hiding under its casing — the horned boss is a show-stopper. But Astal fundamentally fails to provide the standard of gameplay found in 16bit classics like Pitfall, Earthworm Jim and Dynamite Headdy



With bugs of this magnitude Rentokil is not an option.

BLOW ME DOWN

As well as crude man-handling skills, Astal sure has a pair of lungs on him (hey, smoking — Knuckles says 'Who needs it kids!'). These are used to blow the enemy away, and in the fiery level Astal employs it to remove various kinds of flaming creatures.







Nice effects like the transparent crystal pop up as you journey further.

OI, YOU LOOKIN' AT MY BIRD?

Not long after you set off, you come across a fine-feathered friend, held captive by some callous crystals. After liberating the bird it becomes your companion. Using a whistle command, you can get it to perform three actions. The bird fulfils the task better according to how many crystals have been collected in your bar on the status panel.

FETCH



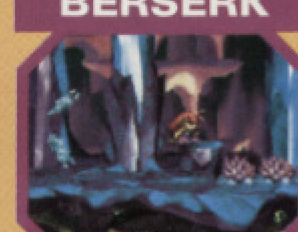
Birdy disappears off screen and returns with a random health power up.

ALERT



Rarely useful, the bird sometimes attacks platforms or bosses on a whim.

BERSERK



Birdo goes mental, whizzing round the screen like an extra from the Hitchcock movie.

GRAPHICS 92

▲The best-looking game on the Saturn to date. The game dabbles in exciting special FX to create some memorable scenery.

ANIMATION 90

▲The main character animation is good, but that of the enemies, if anything, is even better.

MUSIC 81

▲The sound textures are impressive, with some lavish arrangements.

▼The tunes sound like background music from the 'Holiday' programme.

EFFECTS 77

▲Excellent rumblings and whistlings.

▼The FX don't add much excitement to the game.

PLAYABILITY 64

▲There is an interest level sustained by the graphics alone.

▼The levels are too short and the gameplay too basic

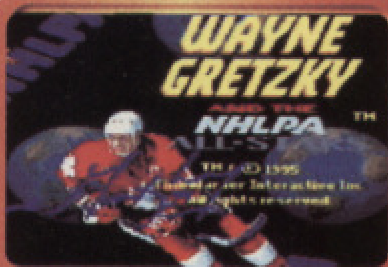
LASTABILITY 41

▼Far too easy, even for novice players.

OVERALL

A beautiful but empty vessel that offers poor value for money despite the awesome graphics.

53



BY: TIME WARNER

RELEASE: JUNE

PRICE: TBA

GAME TYPE: SPORTS

1-4 PLAYERS

16 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
EASY

CONTINUES
BATTERY SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
FAIR

ORIGIN

All the teams and stars of America's NHLPA league, with the all-time scoring champ Wayne Gretzky lending his weight to proceedings.

GAME AIM

Place the puck in the other team's net with a long wooden stick, that might accidentally catch some-one's shin on the way.

BEAT THIS

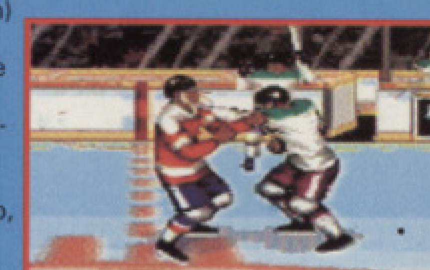
7-1 Sweden vs Canada

WAYNE GRETZKY AND THE NHLPA ALL STARS

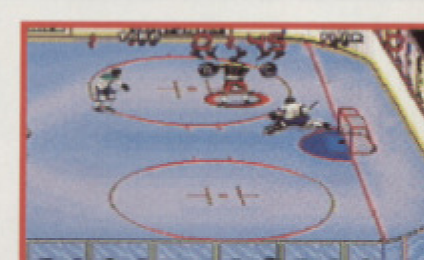
Many have come to worship at the altar marked Ice Hockey within the video game denomination, but Britain may still be regarded as Land of the Infidel. Try as they might, sport moguls cannot get us into a lather about a sport traditionally played by schoolgirls with big shins short skirts, even if it is on ice and has more fractures to the pound than rugby. But the situation is not as cut and dried as it may seem. Although ice hockey has as many devotees as televised dominoes in the UK, the previous games, notably the EA ones, have managed to shift a fair few copies (which is more than can be said for Virtua Domino). The tricky bit for any new contender is to match the critical acclaim and commercial success of the three previous EA titles. So grab your popcorn and let's just see how Time Warner have fared, shall we?

WHERE DO YOU WANT THIS STICK?

Wayne Gretzky's finally delivers what we've wanted for years, a real fighting mode for those little out-of-control moments. And even better (depending on your opinion) it's completely gratuitous! At any moment you can select the 'intimidate' option from the main menu. Forget verbal menacing — this is gloves off and marching across the ice mate. The fracas is shown in close-up, until someone ends up AOT. The game then resumes as if nothing has happened.







SIX NATIONS UNDER GOD

Forget the Yanks — here's the world vis-a-vis Ice Hockey, with our own (as Sean Connery would say) fashinating faxsh.

FINLAND
It's brass monkeys here, which is why the natives love nudey saunas. Got it's name from the fact that its population are in fact half-human, half-fish.

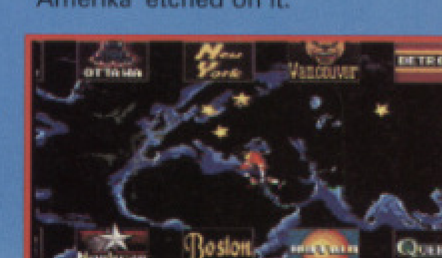
SWEDEN
Also a bit nippy on the meat and two-veg. Purveyors of bands like Roxette and Abba. Consequently, highest suicide rate in world.

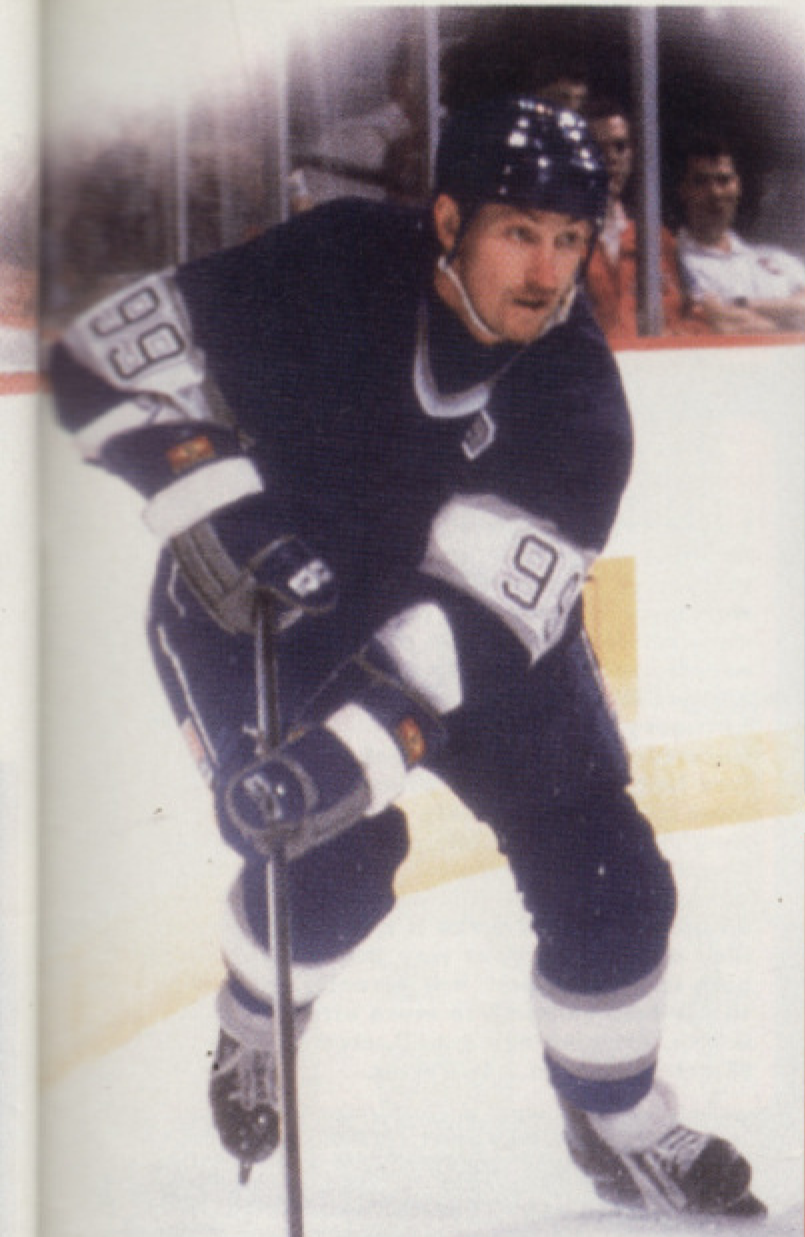
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Whoops! Someone should have told Time Warner that Czechoslovakia no longer exists. Sensibly, the people decided to split into Slovakia and er, Land of Knob.

RUSSIA
Quite a big place, but the people are so poor that they have to play with stale bread rolls and walking sticks. And there so ratted on vodka that they rarely bother.

CANADA
Usually, a nation of Americans waiting for personality transplants and decent credit limits. Also, not the best place for a relaxing fishing holiday. If you're Spanish.

AMERICA
You can't say a word against these guys. Well you can't unless you want Ice-T firing a MX missile into your backyard with 'Love from Amerika' etched on it.







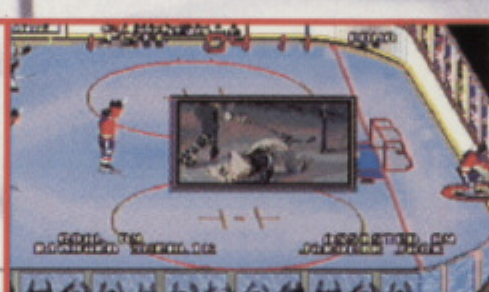
COMMENT

I don't find this the most attractive gambit in hockey-ing in any sense. Visually its all a bit too chunky and nondescript to get the pulse racing. The sprites have been intentionally enlarged, but I fail to see any benefits of that in terms of increased detail or realistic animation. It just serves to clutter the playing area. The gameplay itself is a rather mundane knockabout, which is principally the fault of the absurd spinning move that allows players to take out all others in a ten-mile radius. Using it ensures a rapid return to possession, but with little sense of skill in the doing. I would imagine that four-players might have fun mucking about, but this is not realistically set to topple NHLPA Hockey from its long hegemony.

GUS



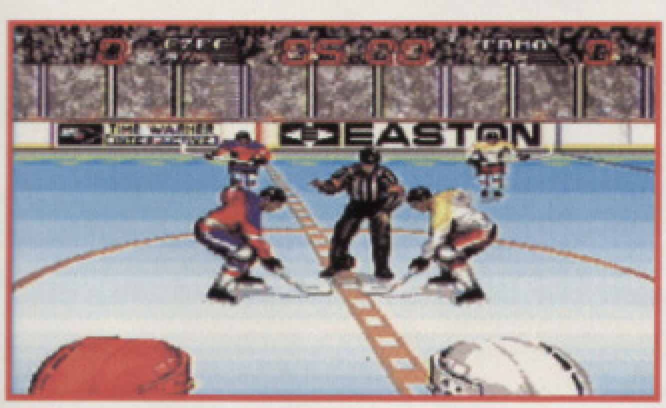
Play! As if your lives depended on it.



The granny-beating sub-game adds much needed appeal.



It's unnerving being shadowed by a suspicious red star.





COMMENT

To get the best out of this game, whack it down to three-a-side and take out the goalkeepers. Then there's a modicum of short-term enjoyment. Otherwise, it all becomes tedious within a short space of time. And don't throw out your copy of EA Hockey.

PAUL

BABY, DON'T FOR-GET MY NUMBERS

It's one of those American things, like lethal injections and alligator farms, but sports fans their just have to have every available stat included on their 'Genesis' carts. The UK has never had quite the same demand for that kind of thing, nevertheless, there are statistics for a mind-blowing 600 players here. That divvy's up between 26 American teams and six international sides.



And it doesn't get any less exciting than this.

GRAPHICS — 57

▼Dull depiction of the rink with an unchanging side-on view. The other options screens are dull and uninspir-ing.

ANIMATION — 47

▼Given that the sprites are so big, little attempt has been made to add char-acter or realism to their movement. The puck also fails to convince.

MUSIC — 38

▼It's not good music.

EFFECTS — 66

▲The speech has had attention and fares quite well.

▼Some of the stifled FX are laughably poor.

PLAYABILITY — 57

▲The four-player goalies-free mode has something going for it.

▼There's not really much depth or sub-tlety, on the rink that is.

LASTABILITY — 54

▲Hey, you can rearrange teams to your heart's con-tent.

▼The thought of an 84 game season does not appeal, strangely.

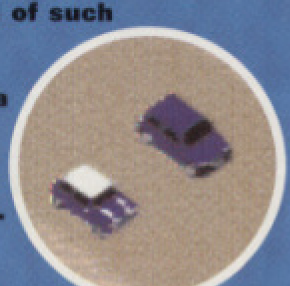
OVERALL

To be brutally frank (and aren't we always?) search out a cheap copy of one of the EA games instead.

59

POWERDRIVE

Calling all Game Gear owners! Have you played Sega Rally yet? The state of the art coin-op that captures all the thrills and spills of off-road rally racing. Featuring fantastically realistic texture-mapped graphics and high-octane driving action, it's possibly the greatest racing game around. And it's coming to the Saturn too. But wait a second. Wouldn't it be even better if it could be converted onto the Game Gear? Imagine enjoying all the madcap antics of rally racing at your convenience. Leaping over grassy hillocks whilst sitting on the train, taking a flooded hairpin whilst on the loo, or bashing other cars into steep banks whilst eating your tea. Of course, there isn't a hope in hell of the game ever coming out on your LCD handheld, so you might as well just forget about it. Fortunately though, US Gold have come to the rescue with their own handheld version of rally racing – Powerdrive. Racing across 48 all-weather tracks, you start off racing Mini Coopers and Fiat Cinquecentos before moving onto bigger, better racers, until finally you get behind the wheel of such off-road kings as the Toyata Celica and the famed RS Cosworth.





Lost. Completely lost.



Ooof. It'll cost yer mate.



Recreate scenes from the Italian Job.

COMMENT



PAUL

I can't say I was that impressed by the Megadrive version of Powerdrive. However, the idea of a plan-view off-road racer like this seems much more suited to a Game Gear game, at least in theory anyway. Unfortunately, the game suffers from a number of problems and, unfortunately they're much the same problems the Megadrive version fell down on. Difficult steering and slow movement, together with simple tracks all make it quite dull. The idea of working your way through to better cars is pretty good, but actually getting to those cars seems like more effort than it's worth. Plus, to use a well used quote – Micro Machines 2 is better.

OUT OF CAR EXPERIENCE

Actually, if truth be known, you don't get the chance to get behind the wheel of any car in Powerdrive. You see, this is actually one of those plan-view racers, similar to Micro Machines. Still that's no bad thing though, because you get to see the authentically designed car graphics from the outside. These have actually been based around the original computer designs of the real cars, although, we must confess, they have lost a bit of detail in transition to the Game gear. Just a bit though.

COMMENT



GUS

Powerdrive would seem like quite a good effort if it wasn't for Micro Machines. Yep, codies have that particular fish expertly filletted, and any other racer just can't touch it. Tough, but then who ever said life was fair? Not only that, but my initial interest tended to wane as a distinct lack of new features seemed the form as race followed race. Shame, as technically it more than matches the limp Megadrive version.

RELEASE: JUNE	MEG: 4
PLAYERS: 1	PRICE: TBA
BY: US GOLD	GAME TYPE: DRIVING

Category	Score	Comment
GRAPHICS	72	Neat looking cars, but bland colours give the graphics a very washed out feel.
EFFECTS	80	Okay spot-effects though.
ANIMATION	64	Nothing exceptional in this department.
PLAYABILITY	64	Difficult steering and a lack of speed ruin the action.
MUSIC	66	Poor tunes, even by tinkly GG standards.
LASTABILITY	71	A lot of tracks and lot of cars, if you're a patient person.

OVERALL 65

An okay racer that suffers from some annoying gameplay faults.

People have been saying I'm too cynical lately. Why, they say, should you slag off Elton John for writing a song called Made in England when he spends most of his time hanging out in LA? And Billy Connolly — he comes over to do a tour of his 'beloved' homeland, before pocketing the fee and nipping back to the Malibu beachfront house. Nice work if you can get it, so I'm thinking of doing the same thing — moving to Japan, designing the next Mario game, buying an Ultra 64 while writing this column saying how great Sega games are. In fact, maybe that's what I'm doing now. Maybe I'm sitting in an X-rated Manga babes salon as we speak, sipping cocktails with Shigeru Miyamoto and praising the Virtual Game Boy...Sayonara, paranoia fans, until next time.



Anonymous artwork featuring the ever-popular garden celeb.

CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Dear Yob
I am an avid X-Men fan, and so I wasted no time in buying the X-Men 2 cart for the Megadrive, after seeing it previewed in the March issue of your fab mag. I am writing to you, because in the said issue, there was a screenshot of Magneto on stage three (or two if you don't count the introductory level). What I would like you to tell me is how on Earth you managed this, as Magneto doesn't become playable as a character until stage four — Apocalypse's Fortress. Clearly either the programmers changed their minds, or there is a cheat. If the latter is correct, could you please tell me this cheat.
Mr E Lesherr, Avalon.

YOB:Consultations with ver lads sorts this out. When they previewed X-Men 2, Sega showed them an unfinished debug version of the game that allowed them to play any level with any character, thus the strange appearance of Magneto. It's a useful way of getting pictures from later stages of the game when playing time is limited. So your dreams of handling Magneto prematurely have been dashed, mate.

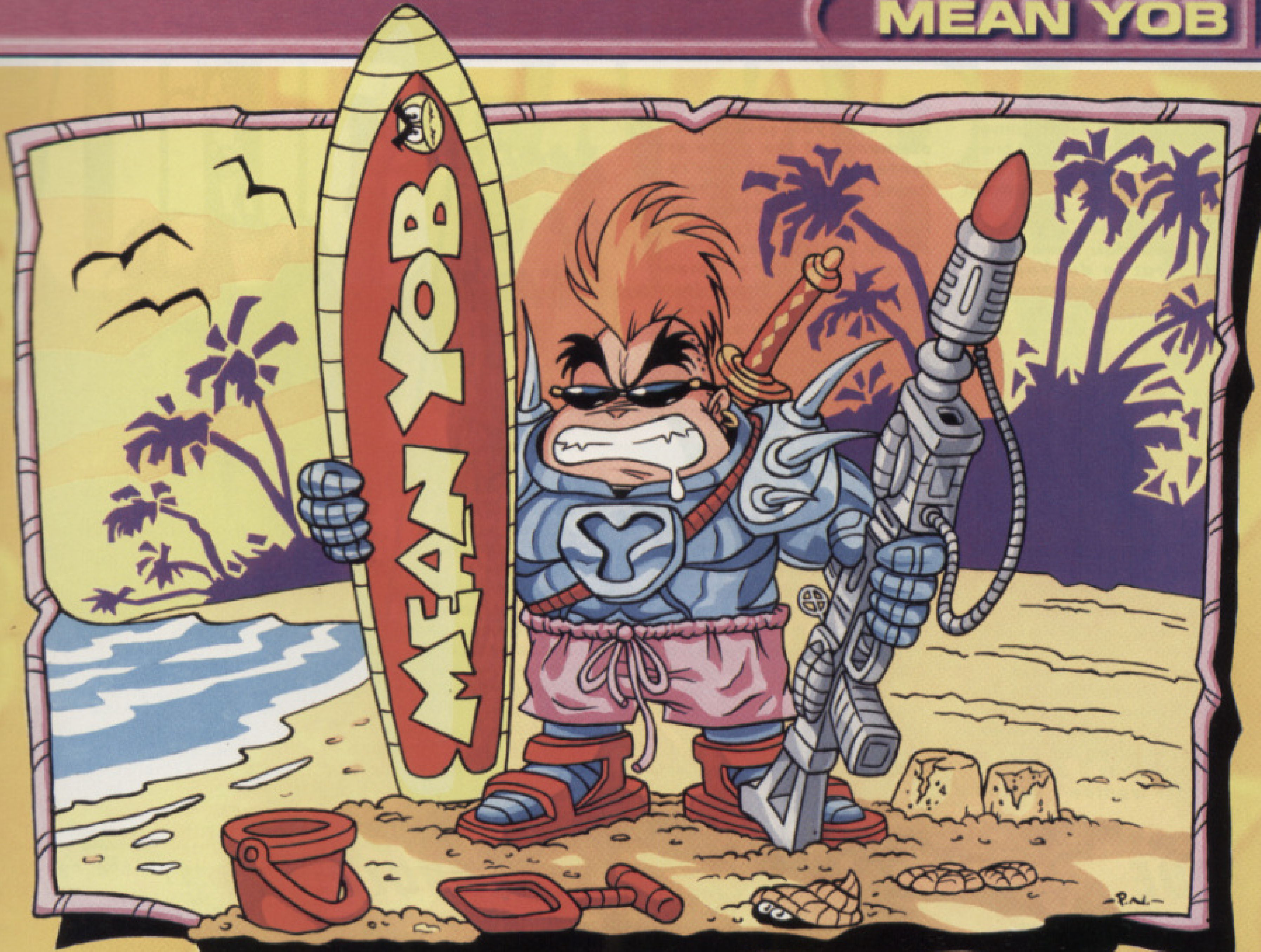


We apologise for offence caused by this filth from David Greece, Liverpool


Bultins comp for most revolting belly button won by Ryan Hunter.

LIFE OF BRIAN

Dear Yob
Hello once again, it is I. What happened to the letters page these past few months? Can people not even apply sentence structure to their 'letters' any more? Not like the good old days. Most of them now aren't even worth slagging off. But I've got to write about something that really annoys me to hell, something that's, erm, got my goat. To do this, I must change into my crime-busting alter-ego, Squad Leader Johnson of the Copyright Fraud Squad!
Doesn't it make you mad when talentless gibbons with the creativity of Mary Whitehouse try to rip off other people's ideas? The early 80's were bad enough with infinite identical copies of Pacman called 'Munchman', 'Gobbleman', and 'Puckman' etc. Not to mention all the Space Invaders and Defender clones! And it still goes on today. Issue 31 of MEAN MACHINES got me thinking when you announced there's going to be a game of Tank Girl. I jumped on the case, did some research, and found this too is a bad offender. Let's examine Tank Girl's ripped-off roots.
Tank Girl originally comes from an unknown, obscure 'anarchic' magazine called Deadline. However, even a blind mollusc can see that Tank Girl is a complete and total rip-off of the immensely popular Manga strip/ Anime video series, Dominion Tank Police, which was created before. Even the name Tank Girl is a catchphrase that has been used to describe Tank Police. And like Pacman, Defender, the original always crushes the fake, and nowhere is this more true than the Tank Police vs Tank Girl debate. For instance, attempts to bring Tank Police to the screen have resulted



in major sucesses, with the the best-selling Anime series and the better much awaited New Dominion Tank Police series out now. The film of Tank Girl didn't exactly do very well in the USA, did it? Probably because the comic strip is unheard of, whereas Dominion is famous. Plus the fact the Tank Girl comic strip has extremely crap artwork with not even any shading. But now I must go to polish my Tank, but I shall return from the files of Johnson's Copyright Fraud Squad.
Paul Johnson, Skegness

YOB:Stop right there! I personally won't have a word said against my mate Tank Girl, especially since we met at the Exeter & Somerset Annual MCC dinner dance, swopped maintenance tips and engraved each other's spanners. What you say about the movie is crap — it hasn't even been released in the States. There have been some negative reports, but let's just wait until June shall we. Saying the strip is 'unheard of' beggars belief. But then again, you do come from Skegness, so we should make allowances. I think most people would find the Gen X-tribal coolness of Tank Girl a little more meaty than Jap cartoon birds with big eyes.



The horrors of liver damage: clinical study, Rockman by Shaz.

NATURAL BORN KILLERS

Dear Yob
I have been reading your magazine for three years and have not missed an issue of MEAN MACHINES after issue 20 and have not once felt compelled to write in a complain about licences for the Sega systems. But just recently I heard about the how terrible the conversion of Akira has suddenly turned out. I have seen the film and really do rate it, but what I would really like to know is how the company responsible creating the game have managed to foul it up. The film had so many scenes which could have been easily recreated, eg the gang warfare on motorbikes at the start of the film. This could have been made into a Road Rash sequence, and if it played well and was true to the film, it would have been brilliant. I have played on the Amiga CD version and



More Ryan Hunter of East Kilbride. Cool.

think it is rubbish. I really would have paid £60 for a decent conversion of this brilliant film. Just one more thing, why was the 32X version of Aliens scrapped, that would have been ace.
Kaneda, The Remains of Neo Tokyo
YOB:I think you have some sorting out to do. You complain about crap game development and then admit to having an Amiga CD32! I could have told you that hunk of junk would have fouled up Akira without the need to shell out £60. In any case, I wouldn't fill my pants with rusty water over Akira. The beat 'em up has been kicking around on various formats courtesy of THQ for the last couple of years, and it's unlikely that it will ever see the light of day here. Yes, it could have made a great game, but then so could most manga/live-action movies. That's life. As for Alien Trilogy, Acclaim's plans are so revolutionary and demanding on the hardware that a 32X version just wouldn't do them justice.

TRUE ROMANCE

Dear Yob
I feel that I have to write to you about the review of the game 'Story of Thor'. I agree with almost everything mentioned in the review, the graphics, the feel of the control system. But the game lacks a plot — one piddling little kidnapping and only eight tiny little dungeons do not make a decent RPG. There is only one village and all the inhabitants were obsessed by digging. Also there was none of the humour and depth of plot that I found in Landstalker (which took me 20 hours to complete). So how come this cart with a whopping 24 MEG took me only six and a half hours to complete. I am definitely not a games wizard, after five months I still can't get past Major Mucus on Earthworm Jim, but Story of Thor offered no challenge whatsoever. Not once did I flick off my Megadrive in complete bewilderment of a puzzle. Sorry for whingeing, but I had to get that off my chest. Feel free to berate me (go on look it up), and congrats on an otherwise brilliant mag.
Alex B, Alfreton, Derbyshire
YOB:Don't underestimate yourself, Alex. To complete Thor in less than seven hours is a bit of an achievement. I'd guess your gaming skills are well above average, and that's where the difficulty lies. Like you say, most elements of the game are fantastic (though you're being unfair about the plot, which develops quite well). The game is considerably easier than Landstalker, but we mentioned several times in the comments that we had doubts about its easiness. I take your point, but in future I'd look out for really challenging games.

FREAKS

Dear Yob
I wish there would be more Game Gear reviews and tips. At the moment we only get one or two if we're lucky. Which is the best game out of Mickey Mouse 2, Streets of Rage, Sonic 2, or Lemmings? And which do you think is the best out Game Gear, Game Boy, Super NES, and Megadrive? Please, please write back when the Game Gear is printed, if it is.
Melissa Spalding, Peterborough
YOB:We'd plump for Game Gear and Megadrive, fart breath. I don't know — you Game Gear owners are so ungrateful. If there was ten new Game Gear releases a month, don't you think we'd cover them? Only this month we grabbed the first European copy of Earthworm Jim to preview. The blunt fact is that good GG gear is hard to come by, but that's not our fault. The good news is there seems to be a steady increase in quality — Operation Starfish, Megaman and more on the horizon. Oh, and Sonic 2, luv.



Some good old Sega/Nintendo rivalry from Faizul Adli Wan.

FACES OF DEATH

Dear Yob
Sega Power are really getting up my ass! They slag you off all the time, and all the do is try to be funny, but fail miserably. They never do a real review without some stupid attempt at comedy. I mean what exactly is a 'tips nappy'?
Savatage, London
There was a time when Sega Power could never get up your ass, but it was thicker then and had more pages. Now in your case it's probably like throwing a saveloy up an alleyway. We only wish the best for our good buddies on the good ship SP, and this advice — don't go up on deck without a lifejacket.

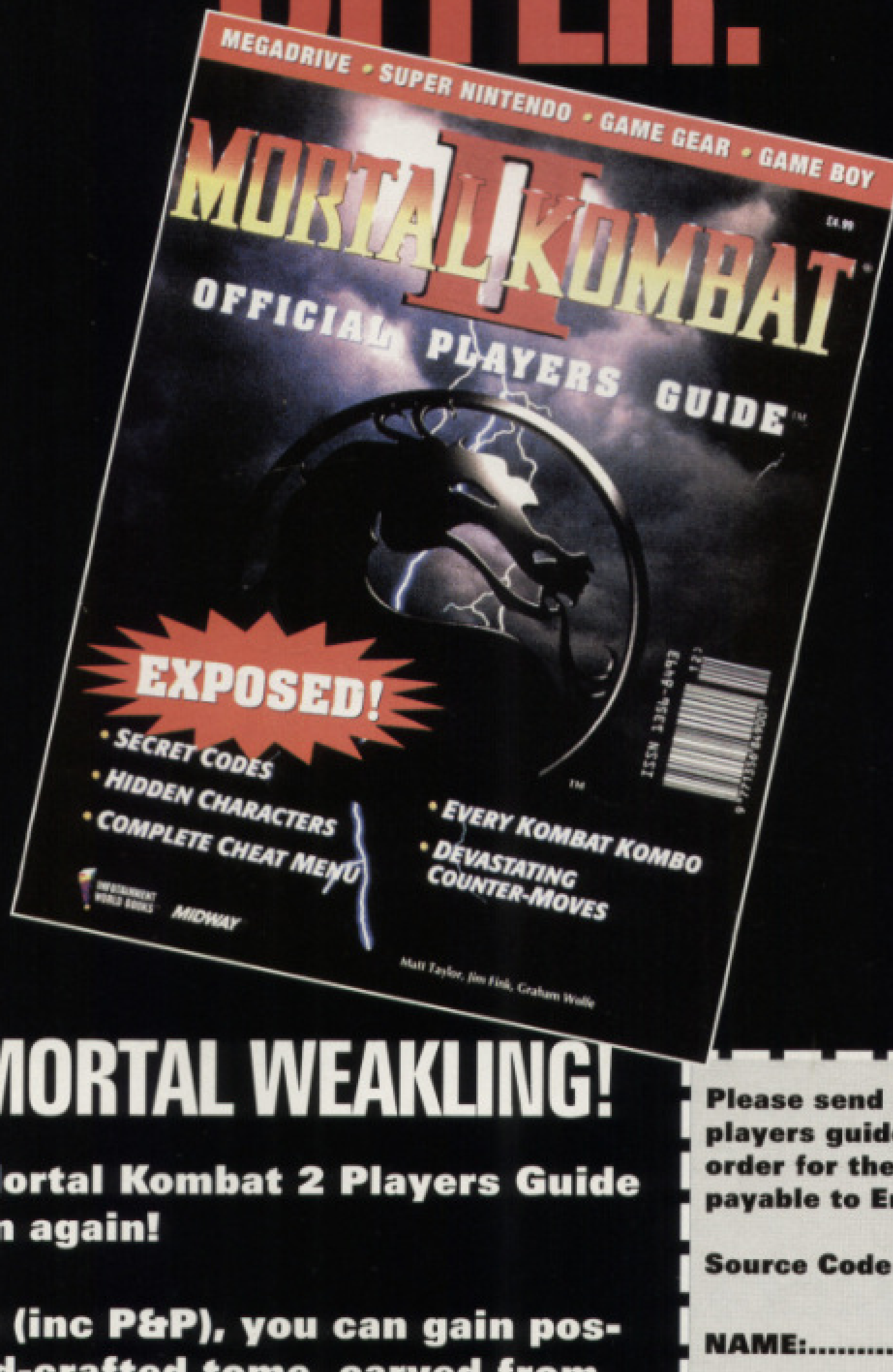


The best-looking worm I've ever seen. From John Cooper.

RESERVOIR DOGS

Dear Yob
I am the master. You will obey me! By now the hypnotic powers of my last letter may have worn off, but make no mistake, you still must obey! With UK Gold re-showing the Third Doctor's episodes on Sunday, this gives you all a chance to re-watch my early evil schemes. Thrill to my chilling evil laugh! Marvel at my world dominating plans! Admire my incredible disguises that have everyone fooled! But all is not well. Remember my latest plot to take over Bognor Regis?
Well, I would be ruling the whole universe from my Bognor power base now if it weren't for that meddling Colonel Guile and his karate sidekick, Cammy. Someone told them where I was... Is this your doing Merrett? But it doesn't matter anyway, my latest master plan cannot fail. Using my superior TARDIS and evil Time Lord genius, I have created a device that enables me to travel into a standard cathode ray tube from any TV and bring back anything from the screen, be it game, film, or even Masterchef! Using this I have assembled a force of deadly characters under my control. Ha, haa, haa! Yes, unless my demands are met, I will unleash them on the world. I have Chun Li, Sub Zero, Rambo, Tetsuo and Kaneda from Akira, and the dreaded Pacman. So fear me and give me what I want. John Major and the Queen must send me the following — a Saturn with Daytona, Virtua Fighter, Panzer Dragoon, Virtua Fighter 2, 3 Surloin [sic] steaks, a signed photo of Jean-Luc Picard, and Michael Caine's mini from the Italian Job. Send these items to fortress Cleethorpes. Take my threats seriously. You haven't seen the last of me!
The Master, Gallifrey
YOB:I've instructed the letter-compiling minion, who selects some epistles for me to peruse, that your crap has never to hit the letters page again. You think you can raise a titter by weak jokes on 'Cleethorpes' and 'Bognor Regis' and lists of nonsense demands. Your 'comedy' sucks, your life is a waste of resources. The words 'Les' and 'Dennis' spring to mind.

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Q&A

Eee, the places looks reet champion for Oz's lick of paint. Gone is the pic of someone with quiffier hair than me and a chainsaw, replaced by a more realistic pic of me in my natural habitat. Seriously, you can set your watch by me. Never ring me at 9:14 in the morning, as I'm off with a copy of Games World (the only mag that is guaranteed to make me laugh until my bowels loosen!) for the morning dump. I'm legendary in the office for it. Ah well, enough of this scatological frivolity, if you have a question you want answered write to me at the address below and I'll do what I can. But only after 9:25...

AAAH! I FEEL TWO STONE LIGHTER Q&A,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

COOKIE

Dear Steve,
Please be a good geez and answer my questions.
1. Is Discworld coming out on the Saturn?
2. Have Lucasarts signed to develop for the Saturn, and if so what will they be bringing out?
3. Whatever happened to Indiana Jones and Monkey Island II for the Mega-CD?
4. Will Theme Park, Syndicate, Wing Commander III, Policenauts, Return Fire, Bubble Symphony, and Samurai Shodown 2 be coming out for the Saturn?
5. Will EA be releasing any of their sports games for the Saturn?
6. Is Daytona any good?
7. Is Daytona the greatest game ever and does it have a two-player mode?
Alan Baker, Stoke Newington
PS: Has anyone in the office seen a film called Braindead?

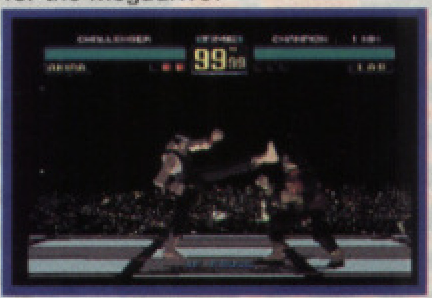
STEVE: 1. Yep, but not for ages. 2. They have indeed, and are said to be working on an all-new Star Wars game. 3. They got scrapped. 4. None have been confirmed, but I reckon EA will probably port over Wing Commander III at some point — they've got to pay mark Hammill's wages somehow. 5. FIFA looks likely, but no further news. 6. Do bears crap in the woods? 7. One of the best, but alas it is but a solo pastime. Yes, I've seen Braindead. It's worth seeing for the bit where the bloke pokes his brain back into his skull alone.

IMHOTEP

Dear Steve,
Could you please answer my questions.
1. When I was in my local video shot I noticed Jurassic Park II for the SNES. Will this be released for the Megadrive?
2. Will there be a sequel to the Lion King?
3. Apart from FIFA '95, what other brilliant football games are there?
4. I'm going to buy a Sega game for the Megadrive at Christmas, what good games will be coming out then?
5. Is Man Utd going to be better than Fever Pitch?
Steven G, Scotland
STEVE: 1. Nope, Sony scrapped it. Good, it was crap anyway. 2. What? Like 'Return of the King of the Lions'? Nope. 3. Fever Pitch. 4. Bloody hell, you're looking forward a bit! MKIII, and Earthworm Jim II, I suppose. 5. Nope. Man U is utter guff.

BLACKWYCH

Dear Steve,
Please answer my questions or I'll make your life a living hell...
1. How much will Theme Park be for the Megadrive?



2. If I bought SSFII in America would it work on a British Megadrive?
3. Please put these in order, from greatest to worst: EWJ, Sonic and Knuckles, Cannon Fodder, Theme Park, FIFA '95, SSF2.
4. I'm thinking of buying a Saturn, what games would you recommend?
5. In MKIII are there any new characters? If so who?
6. I heard that Sonya and Kano are in MKIII. Is this true?
7. Those bloody sods at Digitiser say Road Rash III is better than FIFA '95, Superstar Soccer and Virtua Fighter! How crap can you get!
8. Please can I have some cheats for SSF II?
9. Has Paul still got Scabies?
Gareth J and Jack W, Liverpool
STEVE: 1. In the £50 region. 2. Yep, it should do. 3. EWJ, Theme Park, Fodder, FIFA, Sonic and Knuckles, SSF2. 4. Daytona, Virtua Fighter, and Alien Trilogy. 5. Yep, see out cover story for all the info. 6. I'm not answering that, there's guff about it at the front of the mag. 7. Sounds dodgy to me. Still, who am I to question such wisdom? After all, all the speccy prats will do is slag me off within their four letters pages (three if you ignore that stupid chinny bloke at the end). 8. No, I can't be arsed. 9. Yes, and worms.



TRANS AM

Dear Steve,
Please can you answer the following questions.
1. Please put these games in order from best to worse: Micro Machines II, Theme Park, NBA Jam: TE, Psycho Pinball.
2. Is Street Racer on the Megadrive better than the SNES version?
3. Is Theme park on the Megadrive worth getting?
4. Are there any footy games coming out for the Saturn?
5. I've heard rumours there's going to be a Speedball III. Is this true?
6. Is Striker on the Megadrive any good?
7. When will Daytona be out for the Saturn?
Erik Smith, Greenfaulds
STEVE: 1. You already have. 2. Nope. I reckon Street Racer for the Megadrive is one of the most overrated games ever. The footy subgame just doesn't work, and the controls are dodgy — you can even drive on water! 3. Yessiree. 4. Victory Goal has been out on import for ages, but is crap. Expect news on FIFA soon. 5. Nope, the Bitmaps have no plans. 6. No, it is the worst piece of crap to stick out of the office Megadrive since Dark Castle. 7. It's out now on import. It'll be released officially in September.

GUNFRIGHT

Dear Steve,
Please would you answer my questions.
1. Do you think Sensible World Of Soccer is worth getting when it comes out?
2. Please put these in order of best to worst: Road Rash III, Rugby World Cup, Theme Park.
3. What's your opinion of Fever Pitch? 4. Is FIFA any good on the Game Boy?
5. Why don't they use real players' names on FIFA like they do with Sensi?
6. Have you got any cheats for FIFA '95?
7. What's the best footy game for the Mega-CD?
8. Is there going to be a FIFA '95 or FIFA '96 for the Game Boy?
9. Are there any footy games due for the 32X?
10. Is Brian Lara Cricket worth getting when it comes out?
Martin Barker, Middlesex
STEVE: 1. The Amiga version was cool, but the Sega versions have been put on a back-burner. We've heard nowt for ages. 2. Theme Park, Rugby, Rash III. 3. Great. I'd even stick my neck out and say it's better than FIFA '95. It's faster and more controllable, that's for sure. 4. It's Ok. 5. Because you have to pay to do so, and EA didn't think it was necessary. 6. Yeah, Paul printed them a few months back, so I won't bother reprinting them here. 7. FIFA or Sensi, depending on which cart one you preferred. 8. Nope. Anyway, in case you hadn't noticed from the title 'MEAN MACHINES SEGA' we don't do bloody Game Boys! No, we prefer clunky handhelds which eat batteries like Claire eats chocolate. 9. Nope. 10. Yes, it's the best of the lot. And the only one.

NIGHTSHADE

Dear Steve,
Please answer these problems for me.
1. Is the Mega-CD worth getting?
2. Is Night Trap any good?
3. What does RPG stand for?
4. Would you list these from best to worst: Sol Feace, Thunderhawk, Tomcat Alley, FIFA, Streets Of Rage,

Final Fight.

Richard Flemming, Sussex

STEVE: 1. No. 2. Nope, it's like watching a crap B-movie through a pair of tights. Not that I've tried it, mind. 3. Ropey Puzzle Game, Rumpy Pumpy's Great, and Rancid Pleasure Gash. Or Role-Playing Game. Take your pick. 4. Streets Of Rage, Final Fight, FIFA, Thunderhawk, Sol Feace, a pile of steaming dung, Tomcat Alley.





PSSST!

Dear Steve,
I own a Megadrive and a Mega-CD and have some questions for you to answer.
1. Is Alone In The Dark coming out for the Mega-CD?
2. Will it be an exact copy of the 3DO version?
3. When will it be available?
4. When are you going to review Road Rash CD and Super Strike?

Michael Counell, London

STEVE: 1. No. 2. No, it'll be invisible for a start. 3. The same time as Daytona for the Master System. 4. We've reviewed Rash CD already, and Super Strike seems to be on hold at the mo.

LUNAR JETMAN

Dear Steve,
I've been a really good boy and haven't put anything in about Earthworm Jim. Please send me a 3DO, and if that's a bit steep a CDi would do.
1. Where did the word Sega come from and what does it mean?
2. What is your favourite game at the moment?
3. Who is Rich?
4. What team do you support?
5. Is the Street Fighter film worth seeing?
6. Is the Saturn 32 or 64bit?
7. Will there be any more games with Sonic in, or is he too dated?
8. Where did Tails go after Sonic 3?
9. Will there be a Cannon Fodder 2 for the Megadrive?

Matt Power, Harlow

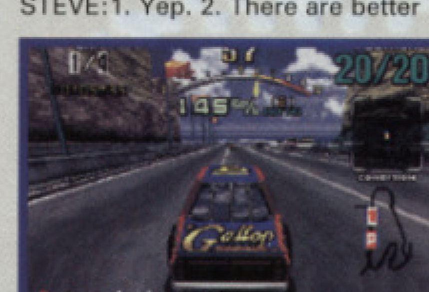
STEVE: 1. It's a compacted version of Service-Games. Sega. Good, eh? 2. International Superstar Soccer for the SNES. 3. Well, the Queen's got a few bob. 4. West Ham. For my sins. 5. Only for a laugh. It is the most unintentionally funny film ever, and more than a bit crap. 6. 32bit. 7. He's resting at the mo, but will no doubt make his Saturn debut eventually. 8. Into a new Game Gear game Sega are working on. 9. Yep, but not for a while.

ALIEN 8

Dear Steve,
Please could you answer my questions.
1. s there going to be an Earthworm Jim II?
2. Is Mr Nutz II worth getting?
3. I like racing car games can you tell me the best one to get?
4. Which Megadrive game is the best value for money?
5. Is there going to be a Micro Machines III?

Elise Ma, Cobham

STEVE: 1. Yep. 2. There are better



platformers, it has to be said. 3. Virtua Racing or Micro Machines II. 4. Mega Bomberman or Micro II. 5. It's very, very likely, but no firm news as of yet. Rumour has it there's a construction kit on its way.

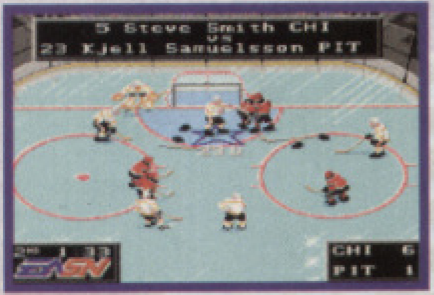
STAFF OF KARNATH

Dear Steve,
Please could you answer the following questions for me.
1. On Eternal Champions for the Megadrive, sometimes during the two-player mode I beat my friend and the backdrop comes to life: ie. in Slash's background, a dinosaur comes in and eats the dead oppo-

nent. Can you tell me how to make this happen?
2. Do you have a cheat to make Eternal Champions easier?
3. When the Saturn comes out how much will it be?
4. Lastly, please could you tell me if the following games are coming out for the 32X: Doom II, Daytona, Ridge Racer, Virtua Fighter II.
J. Rowlands, Kent
STEVE:1. It's a random thing which does it occasionally I think. The CD version has loads of them which are used like Fatalities, though. 2. Yes, practice until you're really good at it. 3. About £400, it hasn't be confirmed, though. 4. None of them are ever going to appear for the 32X. Hmmm, I wonder how long it's destined to last for then. First Afterburner and Space Harrier, then Motocross. Hmm, perhaps it's the new Mega-CD!

ATTIC ATAC

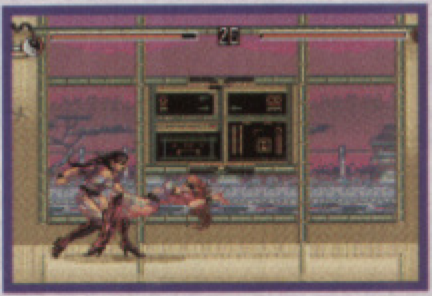
Dear Steve,
Please, please answer my questions for me!
1. Is there going to be a Mortal Kombat IV?
2. What is the best out of MKII and



NBA Jam:TE?
3. Is there going to be an NBA Jam II?
4. Is Chaotix coming out for the Megadrive?
5. Is it true there's going to be an Earthworm Jim II?
Michael Kenwy, East Acton
STEVE:1. Why? Bored of MKIII already are you? I expect there will be, but let's face it when it comes out all you'll want to know is when MKV is coming out. Saddo. 2. It's like comparing Take That to Oasis. They are two very different games, and it depends on what genre you like. Pillock. You're really annoying me, you know. 3. Yes, but surely you'd rather know about NBA III? Turd. 4. No. But, hey, what about Sonic IV. Crapbreath. 5. Yes, and an Earthworm Jim CXII. Git.

UNDER-WURLDE

Dear Steve,
Could you please answer my questions about the Game Gear.
1. Is FIFA on the Game Gear worth buying?
2. Is NHL Hockey worth £30, and do you get the fights like in the Megadrive game?
3. Is Primal Rage coming out for the Game Gear?
4. If it is, how much will it cost and when is it out?
5. Is Theme Park coming out for the handheld?
Adam Russell, Walsall
STEVE:1. Yep. 2. Yes it's worth the cash, but it doesn't have fights in it. 3. Yes, and it's looking really good. 4. About £30 and it's out in August. 5. Nope.



KNIGHT LORE

Dear Steve,
Congratulations on the excellent up-to-date mag. I'm not going to beg, but please, please, pleeeaaassseeee answer my questions?
1. Is it worth buying a Game Gear, or shall I save for a 32X?
2. Please list these games from best to worst: SSFII, Micro Machines II, MKII, FIFA '95.
3. Will there be a Road Rash IV or a Skitchin II?
4. What do you think is the best ever platform game?
5. Why did Eternal Champions get 97% when MKII only got 93%. Is Eternal better than MKII?
6. Why didn't you think of that before?
7. Why on Earth did Sega make a Power Rangers game?
8. What football team do you support,
Fox Mulder, Bolton
STEVE: 1. Save. But not for a 32X. For a Saturn. It'll take ages, but at least it'll be around for a few years! 2. Micro II, MKII, FIFA, SSFII. 3. I bloody hope not. Thankfully, EA aren't planning them either. 4. Earthworm Jim. 5. It's a long and troublesome story and it goes something like this: shortly before Chrimbo 1992 (even before I joined), Gus and Lucy went away for the usual turkey and pud, leaving Rad to review Eternal Champions. Having had too much seasonal cheer, Rad's brain was obviously addled as he gave Sega's utter shite beat 'em up a whopping 97%. He was consequently punched a lot, and told to sod off. Very embarrassing. 6. Because I wasn't here. 7. To exploit the saddo toddlers who buy anything with the Mighty Morphing Mongs on the box. 8. West Ham. Now sod off back to your X-Files.

DRAGON SKULLE

Dear Steve,
Please answer my questions as I am desperate to know the answers.
1. I have a Megadrive and Mega-CD, do you think it is worth me buying a 32X?
2. What happened to MKII and Supreme Warrior, as I haven;t seen reviews in your mag?
3. Is it true that Discworld is coming out for the Mega-CD?
4. Is Sim City 2000 coming out for the Mega-CD?
5. Which is the best game out of Cannon Fodder, Shining Force II or Urban Strike?
6. When is Road rash CD coming out?
Christopher Gutteridge, Swansea
STEVE:1. Nope. 2. Well, MKII got a small 16-page review a few months back, whilst the 32X version got a mere five pages, so perhaps you didn';t have your eyes in those months. As for Supreme Warrior, it's so crap that Acclaim won;t let us have one because they know we'll give it such a kicking its bum will bleed. 3. Not any more it ain't! It's been scrapped. 4. Nope. 5. Cannon Fodder. 6. It's out already.



OUTLAWS

Dear Steve,
Please answer my questions or I'll feel very cheesed indeed.
1. Now that MKIII has hit the arcades could you tell me if the following versions are coming out:
a) 32X
b) Megadrive
c) Saturn
d) Game Gear
2. Will there be a year between Megadrive MKIII and Saturn MKIII, as there was for MKII between the two machines?
3. I own a Megadrive with loads of good stuff (Bomberman, Micro Machines II, etc) and want to upgrade to a 32X. Should I sell my current kit and buy a Neptune or just buy the plug-thru unit?
4. I own a top-of-the-range PC with loads of processing and publishing software. My mates and I all own different consoles, and each week we hire the latest games to review them. As well as reading your great magazine, we produce our own called 'Ultimate Games Player.' Would we need a license to sell copies of it? It's a good magazine which covers every single console apart from Master System and NES which are well and truly dead in my opinion. Also, could you tell me what software MEAN MACHINES is produced with.
5. My local importer has had Daytona for the Saturn for ages, why haven't you reviewed it? We gave it 97%
6. Please answer yes or no to these questions:
a) Saturn = £299.99 inc Virtua Fighter
b) Neptune = £199.99 inc Virtua Fighter
c) Digitiser = pile of Nintendo-biased made on screen.
Ian 'The Master' Willis, Birtley
STEVE:1. MKIII is due for Megadrive and Saturn, as of yet no other versions are planned. 2. Yep, thanks to Sony owning the exclusive rights for the PlayStation version for at least six months. 3. BUY A SATURN. Stuff the Neptune and 32X, both are going to be superseded immediately. 4. If you wanted to sell it to mates that's fine, but getting into shops is harder. Perhaps you could start by getting your local shop to hold a few as a favour? MEAN MACHINES is produced using Quark, high-powered Macs and a time machine which allows us to defy odds to get the bloody thing out! 5. We got Daytona at the same time, but it came in early in the month, thus it seemed like our review was well out of date. C'est la vie! 6. Prices haven't been confirmed by Sega, so I couldn't say. And won't.

So you liked the new pic, huh? Well, if you want to send in,. I only like velvet double quilted. That's enough for one issue, the cheap and crappy ads follow now, so you can skip to Next Month page instead.I'm off there now...

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STEVE



Next month, after sunning myself in 'Californ-I.A' as they say, and sending robot Steve to go and explore the wonders being developed at Virgin's sun-drenched gameplay laboratory, I'll also be bringing back more details from the E3 show, explaining my expense account to Lord EMAP and dissing the dirt on Tank Girl and Acclaim's Batman Forever.

GUS



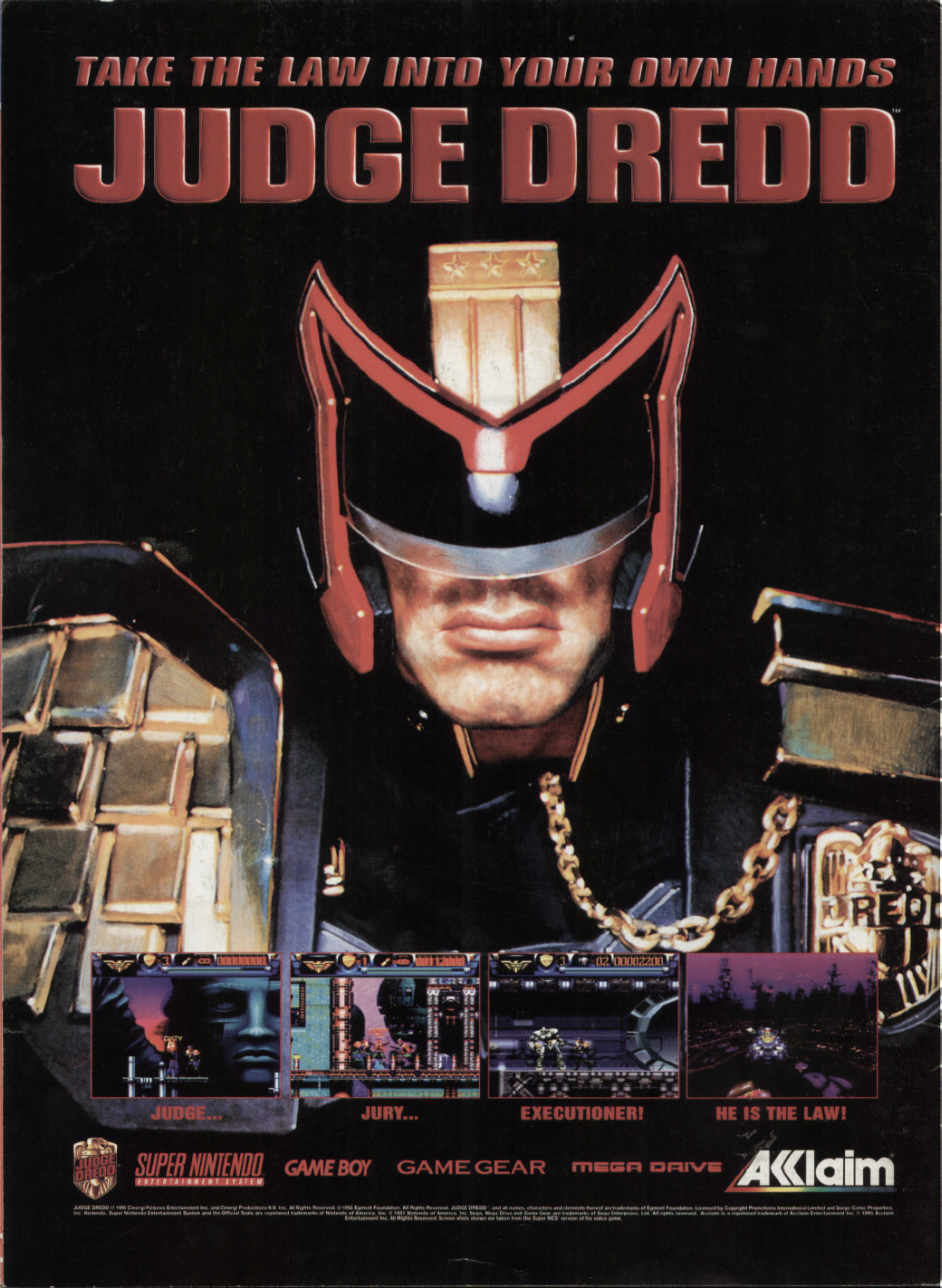
I'll be in the red kitchen, feverishly trying to do Eggs Benedict on a bed of noodles before the 10 minute gong goes. Then, exhausted, I'll sit in front of a monitor to test Grand Chaser, Parodius Deluxe Pack, Light Crusader and Batman and Robin.

PAUL



And I'll be on the couch, after nine, reading your letters and sympathising with your problems. Then I'll put together a spanking tips page, probably with no gratitude whatsoever from that other pair, whilst looking at Ocean's Waterworld, Infogrames' Spirou, Virtua Racing on the Saturn and Claire's boils. Back to the studio!

NEXT ISSUE OF MEAN MACHINES SEGA ON SALE JUNE 26TH



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